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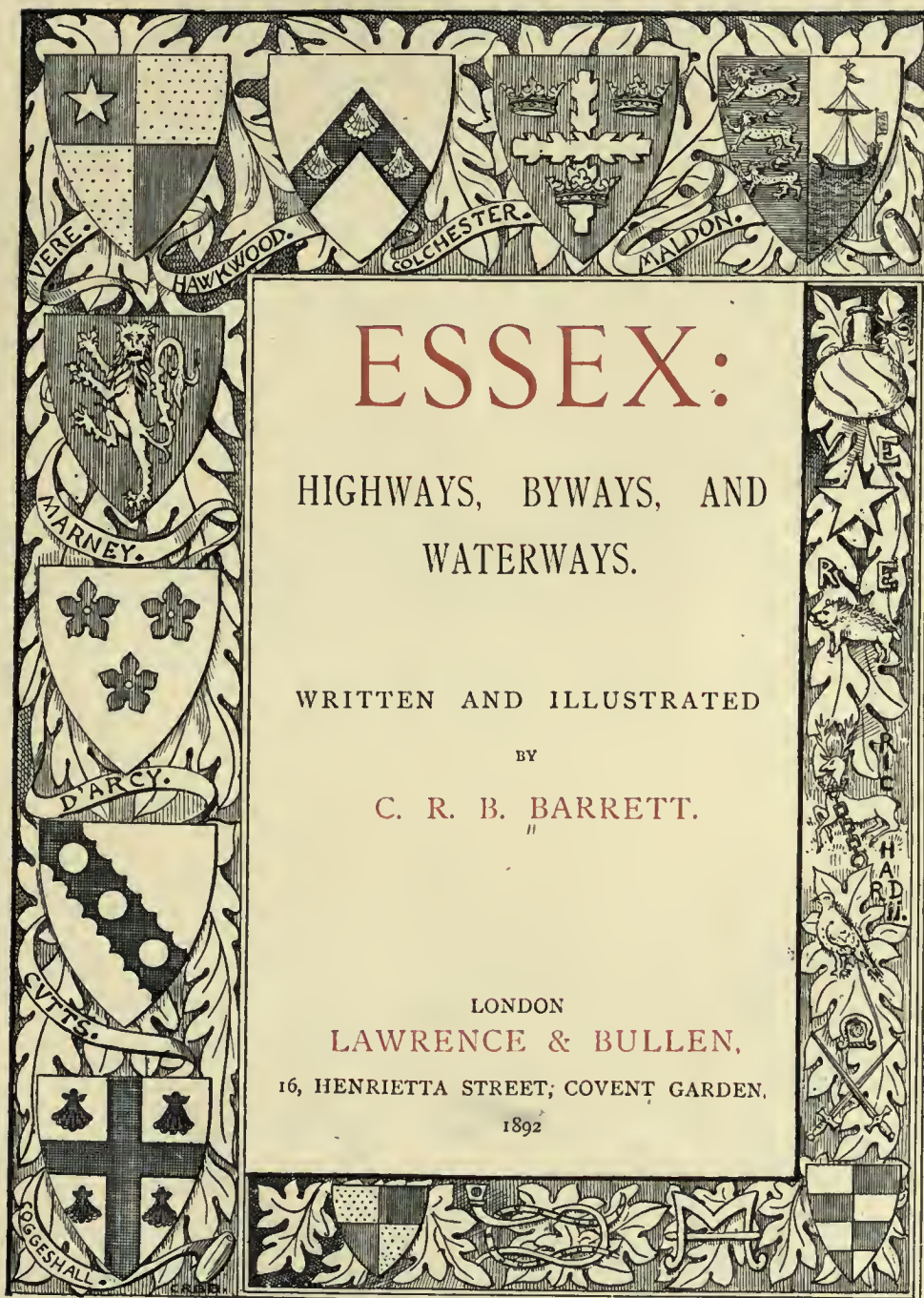
PRESENTED BY
PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID AND
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2 vols,

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ESSEX.



ESSEX:

HIGHWAYS, BYWAYS, AND
WATERWAYS.

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED

BY

C. R. B. BARRETT.

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P R E F A C E.

I HAVE attempted in the present volume to describe and illustrate a portion of ESSEX—a county rich in antiquarian interest, and not deficient in natural beauty.

During the autumn and winter of last year I visited all the places described in the following pages ; and my drawings were made on the spot. I have not employed photography.

From Bradwell Point I pass, *viâ* Maldon and Witham, to Thaxted and Saffron Walden, travelling thence eastward to Layer Marney, Coggeshall, Colchester, and Castle Hedingham. One isolated place, Barking, had claims which could not be disregarded. I trust that the selection of subjects will not appear arbitrary. At least, I may urge that my survey embraces one of the most interesting sections of the county.

Some notice of the Religious and Craft Guilds is here given ; lives of Essex worthies are briefly set down ; and I have touched on the extinct industries of the county. It is almost needless to say that I have drawn freely from the State Papers.

The dissertation on the coinage of Essex is by L. A. Lawrence, Esq., F.R.C.S., Member of the Council of the Numismatic Society.

My warmest thanks are due to Rev. E. Russell Horwood, Vicar of Maldon ; Rev. G. E. Symonds, Vicar of Thaxted ; and Charles Maclean, Esq., of Layer Marney.

C. R. B. BARRETT.

TOWYN, WANDSWORTH, S.W.,

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CHAPTER I.

MALDON.

MALDON, according to Morant, is "one of the two ancientest towns" in the county of Essex, and at first sight has a certain resemblance to the Cinque Port Rye; and this likeness is increased by the nature of the surrounding country. For the town is built on the ridge and sides of an uncomfortably steep hill, on the crest of which stands All Saints, the ancient parish church; while the neighbouring turrets of the Moot Hall, or D'Arcy Tower, overlook the clustering old-fashioned gables of the main street beneath them. A little to the eastward the crenellated, weather beaten top of Dr. Plume's Library, formerly the church of St. Peter, is just to be discerned amid the boughs of the elms which shade the ancient and disused graveyard. At the foot of the hill flows the tidal river Blackwater (in ancient days known as Idumanum and subsequently as Panta Stream), which at the end of the town begins to widen into an estuary, that takes its course through miles of dreary mud-flats and low-lying saltings to Bradwell-juxta-Mare, where it falls into the German Ocean.

In common with most other places, the spelling of Maldon varies very considerably in the documents of unclerkly days, taking the forms Maudone, Maudine, Mealdona, Meandone, Maldun, and Meldun, to which may be added Malden, a style



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at times found in the State Papers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The antiquarian squabble as to whether Maldon was or was not identical with Camulodunum seems to have been satisfactorily settled by Morant in the negative, for

he points out that whereas Camulodunum was 52 miles from London, practically the distance of Colchester, Maldon is only 38. If the common derivation given of the name is correct it signified in the original Saxon, Cross Hill.

The town makes its first appearance in history as far back as the year 913, when Edward the Elder, during the building and fortification of Witham, lay at Maeldune with no inconsiderable body of troops, and seven years later we again find the same King there, this time rebuilding the place and fortifying it, thus enabling the townsmen in the following year to hold their Danish besiegers in check until relief came. On this occasion a crushing defeat was inflicted on the marauders, and very many were slain. The traces of three sides of an earthwork still exist on the western side of the town, but, as far as can be ascertained, Maldon was never walled with stone.

Although worsted on this occasion, the Danes were victorious in 993, as may be gathered from the interesting fragment of an Anglo-Saxon poem commemorating the deeds and death of Byrhtnoth. The poem tells how Byrhtnoth, having once defeated the Danes at Maldon, retired to his native Northumberland. Hearing that another horde had appeared in Essex, he started in all haste to combat them, and passed Ramsey and Ely on his march. At the last-named place he halted for rest and refreshment, bestowing gifts and lands on the Abbey. Arrived at Maldon, he found the Danes, led by Unlaf, who at first made overtures to the Saxons with a view to accepting a money payment as the price of their

withdrawal. Byrhtnoth most scornfully rejected the shameful offer, and the two armies drew up in order of battle, separated by the Panta Stream, then at high tide. When at length they came to close quarters, the struggle was obstinate and deadly. Wulfstan the son, and Wulfinaer the nephew, of Byrhtnoth, performed many deeds of valour. Wulfmaer was slain, and his uncle rushing to avenge his death was smitten by a dart, not, however, to fall until he had cut down his assailant with an axe. Byrhtnoth with his last breath encourages his men to fight and defend their country, and they in their turn exhort one another to avenge the loss of their leader. But the Danes were ultimately victorious, and the fragment concludes with the finding of the body of Byrhtnoth by the Abbot of Ely, who honourably buries it at his Abbey.

The notice of Maldon in the "Domesday Survey" is chiefly interesting from the mention of the building of a ship as part of the tenure; the same condition being found in all the charters subsequently granted to the borough, with the exception of the charter of 1810. The first of these was obtained at the request of William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, in the reign of Henry II., and was very ample in its provisions. This charter was confirmed at various times and by various kings, holding good until the reign of Queen Mary, when a fresh one was granted (June 18, 1553), at the instance of the Comptroller of the Household, Sir Robert Rochester, Kt. The document, however, was practically of no effect, owing to some inexplicable blunder, as neither bailiffs nor officers were named therein, neither was there any clause giving power to the burgesses to nominate, constitute, or elect any of their

number to offices in the Corporation. Affairs in the Borough were consequently at a dead lock until the following February, when another new charter was granted by Mary and Philip. This instrument, which renewed the valuable fishery rights, contained a provision by which Maldon was bound to maintain for the king, as of old, one ship for the space of forty days. The Corporation were "to have a prison within their house of the Mote-hall," of which the bailiffs for the time being should be keepers, and within their Borough or Liberty they were to be possessed of "tumbrel, pillory, and gallows." This Moot-hall, built by Robert D'Arcy in the fifteenth century, and hence popularly known as the D'Arcy Tower, still stands in almost its original condition. The ancient "prison" on the ground floor is even yet used as the police station and cells, while the upper part of the building contains the court room and council chamber. In 1764 the Corporation appears to have become extinct, and for a period of forty-six years the privileges of Maldon as a borough completely lapsed. In 1810, however, through the exertions of a committee, a new charter was obtained, under which Maldon was for the first time ruled over by a mayor, in lieu of the historic two bailiffs.

From the State Papers some curious details may be extracted relative to the municipality. One of the earliest, dated March 27, 1586, is the petition of Thomas Collen or Collins, of Maldon, to the Council, asking, as recompense for the "discovery of Mr. Mantell the traitor," either a twenty-one years' licence as a free victualler, or a licence to transport 400 tuns of beer, or failing these a gratuity of £40 in cash. Mantell, it seems, had agreed to

personate Edward VI., then long dead, in order to fulfil the wild prophecies of one Jane Stantie. On the evidence of Elizabeth Vessie, Raphal Vessie and Collins, Mantell was tried and convicted, but was lucky enough to escape before execution.

Under date December 31, 1596, an entry occurs in a list of the supplies of corn sent to London, from which it appears that during the last three months of that year Maldon furnished 90 quarters of wheat and 770 quarters of oats. Oats would seem to have been the staple crop in the neighbourhood, as no other place is stated to have sent much more than half that quantity.

In the year 1628 the billeting of troops on the inhabitants was a great grievance. The "poor distressed inhabitants of the borough of Maldon" petitioned the Council on account of the behaviour of a company of Irish soldiers. They complain of "insolencies and outrages," and state that the "burden is intolerable," adding a long list of names and particulars. The petition goes on to say of the Irish troops: "They command in our houses as if they were our lords and we their slaves, inforcing us and ours to attend them at their pleasure, and to do the basest offices for them. That, not content with diet proportional to the king's pay, they compel what they will and pay with violence." The petition further declares that the inhabitants are "enforced to stay at home to guard their houses from ransacking, and their wives, daughters and maidservants from violence." Apparently the Council was at first inclined to give a favourable answer, for in February, 1628, comes a petition from one of the Deputy Lieutenants of the county of Essex to the Duke of Buckingham, complaining that the Cor-

poration of Maldon "has misinformed the Council" as to the size of their town, and thereby induced their Lordships to remove the soldiers to Witham. Maldon, says the Deputy Lieutenant, is an ancient corporation with three parish churches, and "has not deserved this favour, having ill-used the soldiers billeted there." He continues that "if they may thus be freed of the



BEELEIGH FALLS.

soldiers, the Duke will have them beaten wheresoever they are billeted." Upon this the Maldon petition was refused, but the matter did not end so easily. On the 18th of March in the same year the Deputy Lieutenant writes to the Council from Witham to give information of a very serious kind. He appears on that date to have removed the company of Captain Roys

Carew (Cary) from Maldon, and to have billeted it at Witham, for the following cause: "On the 17th (St. Patrick's day), by reason of red crosses having been tied to the whipping post and to a dog's tail, a dangerous quarrel arose. Captain Cary was shot in the forehead dangerously, but it is hoped not mortally. Many tradesmen and soldiers were dangerously wounded." The Deputy Lieutenants interposed, and found the country and town in arms, "too strongly by far for the soldiers, and so enraged by reason of thirty wounded townsmen, that despite the proclamation in the king's name they would not dissolve till the soldiers were disarmed." Two soldiers were shot while the Deputy Lieutenants were trying to pacify the people. The letter ends with a warning that "it is likely to happen again unless they be enabled to furnish the soldiers with present pay." Clearly, to be a Deputy Lieutenant in those days involved duties unheard of in these.

The documents relating to the unconstitutional attempt of Charles I. to levy "ship-money" are numerous and interesting. The Writ issued to the Sheriffs of the counties of Suffolk and Essex is dated October 20, 1634, and demands one ship of war of 700 tons, 250 men, ordnance, gunpowder, pikes, and other war-like instruments, double tackling and victuals, until the 1st day of March, and from that time for twenty-six weeks; victuals as well as men's wages, etc. The vessel was to be at Portsmouth before the 1st of March.

In common with the rest of the country the county of Essex objected strongly to the impost; from the evidence of documents it would appear that the borough of Maldon, which was assessed at

£80, by petition obtained a reduction to £60, of which sum £40 was paid at one time, and subsequently (November, 1635) a further amount of £10, which is stated to be "all that can be got, the town daily decaying in trade." On this document an answer is under-written "Nihil," and below this, probably by the collector, "Robert



ST. GILES' HOSPITAL, MALDON.

Coe, I would have his name to be returned. William Painter (says) if he had any leisure, would spend a £100 before he would pay this ship-money." In the long run, however, Maldon had to pay up, and on the 31st of January, 1637-8, a peremptory demand for the £10 due for the year 1636 was sent down from head-

quarters, giving time only until the 2nd of March, and the money was paid on the 21st of July.

But, however much the people of Maldon objected to pay ship-money, they were not by any means averse to doing a little profitable work for the Government, and in 1653 the bailiffs and burgesses, through one James Baxter, petitioned the Navy Commissioners to allow some of the new Government frigates to be built there. The petition was granted, and the numerous documents sent to the authorities in London by the Supervisor at Maldon seem to point to the fact that, with a view to local profit, the timber used was of the worst quality, and the workmanship excessively bad. This Supervisor, whose name was James Perrott, was, perhaps, either over-zealous in the service of the State, or too fond of troubling the Commissioners with communications, and he appears to have been rebuked, as in October, 1653, he writes that he cannot believe the Navy Commissioners are "wrath with him for writing so often, as they gave him warrant to write when anything needed mending." After many delays, on the 1st of April, 1654, a frigate is announced to be ready. Six weeks later the gunner of the *Grantham* is appointed to the Maldon frigate, and at the end of the month it is launched, being named the *Jersey*.

On July 7, 1654, Captain James Terry writes: "That having got the *Jersey* down the river half a mile, he intends to set her masts," and his letter goes on to ask for a lieutenant and a chaplain. Eventually, about the middle of August, the *Jersey* left Maldon, and arrived at Harwich the next day. It was, however, found that

much builder's work was needed, and Terry requests a survey and again asks for a chaplain!

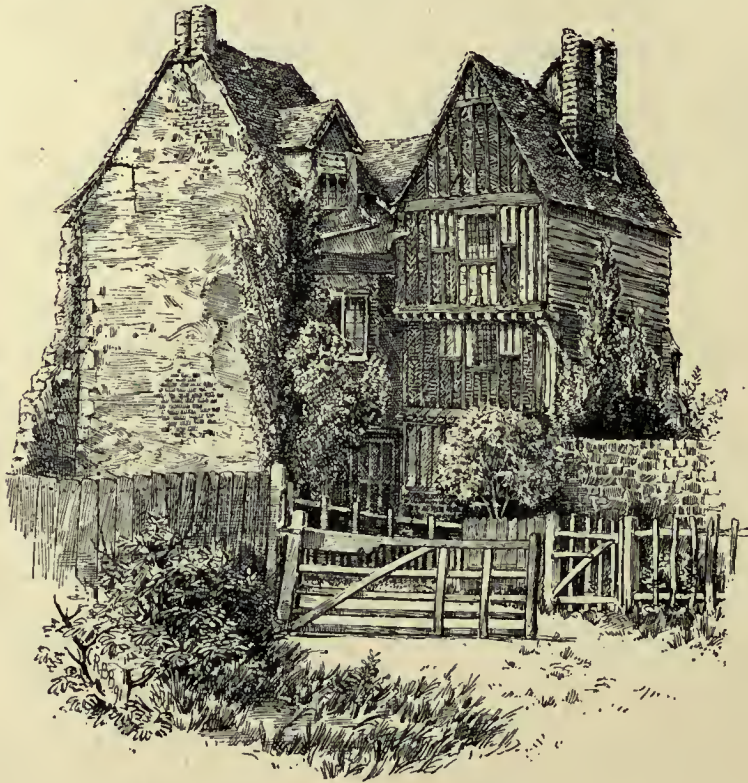
The deputies for the making of saltpetre for the king's use were, as is well known, singularly unpopular throughout the country, and on September 20, 1640, we find the deputy for the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, complaining to the Council that he cannot get coals from one Browning, a coal merchant of Maldon, "tho' he has 2 or 3 hundred chaldron." The deputy states that he went to the bailiffs to fix a price for a compulsory deal; that this they did, but Browning still refused to sell, and that in consequence the manufacture was at a standstill. The Council ordered the coal merchant to supply the coal within the space of four days.

Browning must have been fond of disputes, for in the same year there is a record in the State Papers of some action between him and one Thomas Horth relative to the manufacture of Maldon salt.

Incidentally Maldon occurs in the trial before the Court of High Commission of one John Egerton, a custom-house searcher. It would seem that five packs of foreign Bibles and books of Common Prayer in 12mo, each pack being a load for a man, were smuggled from abroad into Maldon, and thence conveyed to the "Crown Inn" at Aldgate. Egerton discovered the goods and seized them, but offered to give them up for £300, or £50 per year. He eventually took £10 down and a bill for another £10, thereupon offering "to go to Temple Bar and buy spectacles, so that he should not see further than the length of his arm." Unfortunately for himself he was discovered, tried, convicted, and condemned in costs.

Some curious light is thrown on the sending of Government

letters by a document dated June 17, 1654, in which Robert Garrad and William Allen, constables of Witham, write to the Admiralty Commissioners, to send information of Stephen Gaut and four others of Witham, and also to inform them "that the black mare which was taken from Thomas Cottee by Richard



BEELEIGH ABBEY.

Swinborne, to carry letters for the State, was returned, that his wife afterwards rode to Maldon Market with it, and that Cottee offered to sell it." Doubtless the loan of the mare was a forced one, and was very probably inconvenient to Cottee, who seems to

have unsuccessfully tried to turn the tables by a bit of sharp practice.

In 1658 a very unpopular new impost on beer was laid, and we find two magistrates of Maldon getting into trouble for refusing to issue a warrant against Thomas Holland, of Maldon, who was a common brewer. Holland had laid himself open to a fine of £50 for resisting the entrance of the search officers of excise (Major Robert Doughty and another), and also for giving out beer after notice to the contrary. The justices, whose names were John Innis and Edmond Whiteford, were ordered to sign the warrant at once, and to give an account of their reasons for refusal. Innis and Whiteford seem to have still declined to sign, and were ordered to appear before the Council.

The borough of Maldon originally consisted of three parishes: All Saints, St. Peter's, and St. Mary's, of which the first two were parochially united as far back as the year 1306. In mediæval times we find traces of a Religious or Social Guild in each of these parishes—guilds which seem to have been in fairly flourishing circumstances. In the parish of All Saints there was a Guild of St. Catherine, whose priest sang Mass at the church. The Guild of the Virgin Mary had its location in the parish of St. Peter's, where, by licence of King Henry V, the priest sang Mass and kept school. This guild seems to have been the wealthiest of the three, being endowed with meadows, tenements, and a gate-house. In St. Mary's existed the Guild of St. George, of which no details are to be obtained beyond an enumeration of lands, the property of the fraternity, in several places.

When the guilds were swept away by Edward VI., the property of the three was granted to one John Welles, and the revenues thus diverted from their rightful owners were estimated to amount to 46s., £9 5s. 9d., and £6 11s. respectively.

The church of All Saints possesses many features of architectural interest. In the first place, its tower is triangular instead of square, and is surmounted by a hexagonal spire. If old prints are to be credited, the spire was formerly a triangular broach; indeed, one county history mentions it as of that form. Hence, strange though it may seem, the tower arch looks (in a north-easterly direction) at an angle with the main body of the church. On one side of this arch, when the plaster was removed a few years since, traces of two windows were discovered, and doubts which had hitherto been felt as to whether the tower had originally been built square were set at rest. As a specimen of architecture the structure is certainly very remarkable, and how it came to be built thus can never now be known, for all records of the building are lost. The south aisle, known as the D'Arcy aisle, and formed of three chapels, from one of which a small door leads down to a crypt, is enriched by a very beautiful arcade. Separating the most easterly chapel of the three from the other two is a curious arch, surmounted within the church by a particularly coarse, but singularly uncommon, crenellated top; the crenellations in fact are as large, or nearly as large, as those ordinarily to be found on the summit of a church turret. This aisle, which contained three chantries, dates from the reign of Henry IV., when it was founded by one of the



*Interior of the Triangular Tower,
All Saints, Walden.*

D'Arcys of Danbury. In tombs and monuments the church is not very rich ; of brasses there remains but the fragment of one—a wheatsheaf on a scutcheon. The slab, inscribed to John Vernon, a Turkey merchant, who died in 1653, is curious from the fact that the worthy trader took the trouble to convey the stone all the way from the ruins of Smyrna.

Of the old church of St. Peter, only the weather-beaten tower now remains, and that is only just kept together by strong iron bands. By means of the turret stair entrance is obtained to a brick building of two stories, built where the nave of the church formerly stood. The lower room is used as a Freemasons' Lodge, the upper one contains the interesting Plume Library.

Thomas Plume, D.D., was a native of Maldon, where he was born in the year 1630. Placed at school in Chelmsford, and subsequently entering Christ's College, Cambridge, he took holy orders, in process of time becoming vicar of Greenwich, and Archdeacon of Rochester. Dr. Plume, who died in November, 1704, by his will was a great benefactor to his native town. To it he presented his large and valuable library, to contain which he had already erected the brick building previously mentioned. By the terms of this will the keeper of the library is to be a "scholar that knows books, M.A., and in holy orders," and shall reside in Maldon, and may be some minister who has a neighbouring living, "or the schoolmaster himself, or any other person of good learning and life that will be engaged to attend every morning and afternoon, except Sunday, in the library room, or in his own house near it, in all four hours a day." The governors of Sion College are to take account of the

Library, 20s. being left them annually for that purpose, and a like sum is set apart for the purchase of books. In addition to this an endowment for educational purposes is provided. The Library itself, though not of any great antiquity as a building, has nevertheless something very charming about it. Entering through the upper part of the tower arch of the church one comes upon a partly panelled, old-world-looking room, with shelves filled with books, and walls hung round with the pictures which formerly belonged to the Venerable Archdeacon. Some of these pictures are worth notice, but they need restoration. Had one time to carefully examine them, the large collection of civil war tracts and pamphlets (some of an earlier date), at present tied in bundles and uncatalogued, covered with thick dust, and in some cases stitched into illuminated vellum fragments, might possibly prove interesting.

The religious houses in Maldon itself were two in number. One, the Priory of the Carmelites, which was founded in the last years of the thirteenth century by Richard Gravesend, Bishop of London, and Richard Isleham, a priest, has vanished, with the exception of an arched doorway in a wall. From this Priory, in the fifteenth century, came four learned men—Thomas Maldon, Richard Acton, Robert of Colchester, and Thomas Hatfield.

The other, a hospital for lepers, dedicated to St. Giles, claims to have been founded by one of the kings of England. Of this the chapel, mainly Early English in style, now remains, but it has been converted into a barn. Within are a few traces of Norman work, and not a little Roman tile has been used in the

construction of the east end. Although so ruinous and dilapidated, the place is still very interesting, and is certainly picturesque. With regard to the history of the hospital, it appears that the foundation was maintained by all forfeitures of "bread, beer, flesh, and fish not fit to be eaten." One is tempted to inquire whether



ST. GILES' HOSPITAL, MALDON.

this food was agreeable to the inmates, or whether these forfeitures took the form of fines, by means of which provisions were purchased.

In the reign of Henry IV. the hospital reverted to the crown, as the then master, one Robert Mansfield, neglected his office for

three years, maintaining neither chaplain nor lepers. In 1411 the hospital was “conveyed” to Thomas Scarlet, abbot of Beeleigh, to the convent and their successors.

Rather less than a mile to the westward of Maldon stands all that remains of the Premonstratensian Abbey of Beeleigh, a relic of a religious house at once so picturesque, and of so much antiquarian interest, that few places in the county can equal it.



BEELEIGH ABBEY.

The Premonstratensians were Canons of Premontr , in the diocese of Laon, and the order was founded in the year 1120 by Norbert of Cleves, Archbishop of Magdeburg. Its rule was Augustinian, and convents for women adjoined those of the men. The order boasted of one saint among its members—viz., St. Gertrude. Now there were two St. Gertrudes, one an abbess in Brabant, living in the seventh century, the other the Premonstratensian virgin and abbess, who was born in 1292. Beeleigh Abbey

was according to tradition founded by Robert de Mantell in the year 1180; but if this date be correct no relics remain of the original abbey. Possibly, however, the actual building was not commenced until later. We find Robert de Mantell giving to his abbey both All Saints and St. Peter's, Maldon, besides other lands and tenements. The house was built and tenanted by certain "Canons of Perundum" (Parndon), who migrated to Beeleigh, deserting their original home. The greater portion of the abbey dates from the reigns of John and Henry III. Though some windows have been inserted at later dates, notably those in the Refectory and Chapter House, and a peculiar Tudor wing has been built at the south end, Beeleigh is, as a whole, Early English, and a very good example of that style. The best view of the abbey is to be obtained from the rifle butts, built oddly enough, immediately against a public footpath. This is, in fact, the first glimpse of the place obtained as one walks to it from Maldon. It stands on the banks of the Blackwater, at the foot of a slope, and faces the western side of Maldon Hill—a truly pleasant spot. It is not, of course, now easy to judge of the former extent of the abbey buildings, seeing that but a fragment of it remains. The church, which stood, it is believed, in the ground fronting the place, and nearest to the river, has entirely vanished. That the present garden was once the abbey graveyard is, however, beyond dispute. The building is entered at the back of the Tudor wing—a wing which has on its creeper-covered lichen-tinted western side hues enough to delight the most exacting of colourists. Here the brickwork between the upright timbers is

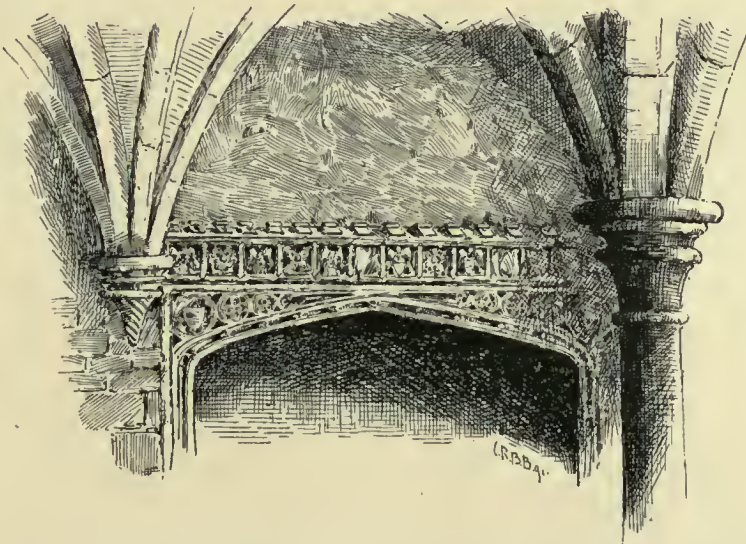
very remarkable, the patterns in the panels being many in number and very quaint in appearance. What woodwork there is, whether bargeboard or beam, is ruinous in condition, but still shows traces of departed, or nearly departed, ornament. Entering, then, by a door in one corner, the older work of the building is at once apparent, and passing a small vaulted room—evidently a cellar in



ENTRANCE TO CHAPTER HOUSE.

monkish times—one finds oneself in a rather long, low room, of which one end is built off. This room, now used as the kitchen, has a row of short, round shafted columns of Purbeck marble down its centre—columns which, with corresponding corbels on the walls, support the plain, but decidedly pleasing, groined

roof. The date of this room is probably the first quarter of the thirteenth century. In the eastern wall windows of Late Perpendicular have been inserted, replacing, no doubt, the earlier lancet. The western wall has a large fireplace in one corner, with carved spandrels, and surmounted by some carved stonework, traditionally the canopy of the tomb of Henry Bouchier, Earl of Essex and Eu, Lord Treasurer in the reign of Edward IV., who



THE REFECTORY FIREPLACE, BEELEIGH.

was buried in the Lady Chapel of the convent, with Isabel Neville, his wife. At the end of the Refectory, and at right angles to it, is an interesting room, also groined. This chamber, which probably was the Chapter House, is of rather later date than the Refectory. Here the central columns are octagonal, three in number, and formed of Purbeck marble. The windows in

the eastern wall are partly blocked. They are square-headed, decorated, and seem to belong to the reign of Edward III. In the sides of the room traces also remain, indicating the former presence of lancet windows, or possibly niches. The west end of the room is very beautiful, with its double arched doors and pair of small double lancets, each topped by a quatrefoil.

Unfortunately one of these windows, as will be seen in the illustration, is concealed by a shed, but sufficient is shown in the sketch to give an idea of the great architectural interest of this beautiful building. The inside of the room would have been a good subject, but a hen-house does not make a comfortable studio. Above the Refectory is an apartment which one must conclude to have been the dormitory of the Abbey. This room, some forty feet in length, has an open roof of either cedar or Spanish chestnut. At one end is a species of screen reaching from the floor to a cross beam. The windows are in pairs, and are evidently Tudor insertions, probably into early lancets. The corbels in the Refectory are all different and singularly elegant; sketches of two form a tail piece to this chapter, specimens which I selected as typical. One of them, as will be seen, has, unfortunately, suffered mutilation, the other bears an almost comic resemblance to a sheep's head. At the dissolution, when the abbot and canons, clad in their white cassocks, rochets, and long white cloaks, were exiled from their pleasant river-side home, the revenues are variously stated to have been £196 6s. 5d. and £157 16s. 11d. The last abbot was one John Copshefe or Copshefe, and he, together with nine canons, signed the deed of

surrender. The Abbey, together with some of its lands, was granted by Henry VIII. to Sir John Gate, and possibly the worthy knight was the builder of the present abbey garden wall near the river.

The very common story of a secret passage is, of course, related of Beeleigh, and the tradition holds that (regardless of engineering difficulties) a passage leads to some spot in Maldon. As evidence of its existence natives triumphantly point to the crown of an arch in the river-side wall.

A few hundred yards from Beeleigh Abbey stand the remains of the abbey mills, mills of which record exists from the very earliest times, but which were rebuilt in comparatively modern days ; beyond this but a few paces, and the river weirs—locally called Beeleigh Falls—come in sight.

They are two in number, and are formed at the junction of two rivers. At either end of the reedy, bush-grown, briar-tangled banks are rushing, tumbling torrents. Trees of many kinds, some of them evergreen, give variety to the foliage in summer, and add to the general charm of the scene. But the evening comes on, and even the most enthusiastic antiquarian wants rest and food ; so leaving the falls behind, I took my way back, stopping only



THE LION TREE.

for a few minutes to sketch an extraordinary freak of nature in the shape of a lion's head. This quaint excrescence, which in the illustration is by no means exaggerated, may be seen on the right-hand side of the road.

Then slowly homeward towards the hostelry, with its quaint old hammered iron sign, and with a last look round at the old abbey from my sketching point, the rifle butts, I finished my first day at Maldon.



CORBELS AT BEELEIGH.



The Blackwater from the Bridge.

CHAPTER II.

A DAY ON THE BLACKWATER.

IT was after careful consideration that I selected the estuary of the Blackwater as the subject of a chapter, and my reasons for so doing were as follows:—The mouth of the Stour from Manningtree to Harwich, skirted as it is on the Essex side by the railway, is tolerably familiar to many. Brightlingsea, which is situated at the mouth of the river Colne, is well known as a yachting station, the neighbouring Priory of St. Osyth being one of the shows of the county. Investigation led to the conclusion that the river Crouch, with its network of tributaries and creeks, though out of the way, was uninteresting; while some account of the comparatively little known estuary of the Blackwater would form a fitting sequel to the previous chapter.

Hence it was that on the morning of the 23rd of November, 1891, at 4.30 A.M., the friendly landlord, according to promise, punctually aroused me. The long wide street of the old town was dark and entirely deserted as I made my way down to the landing-place known as the Hythe, stopping only *en route* at a small inn rejoicing in the uncommon name of the "Welcome Home," to pick up the landlord, owner and skipper of the little thirteen-ton

boat in which my voyage was to be made. Arrived at the landing-place or "hard" we were soon on board, where guns and provisions for the day had previously been stowed away ; and a few minutes after five o'clock we hoisted sail, and with tide and sufficient wind in our favour started on our trip. Ahead everything was shrouded in mist, one twinkling light in the distance alone being visible to indicate the position of the port of Maldon—a cluster of houses and a small



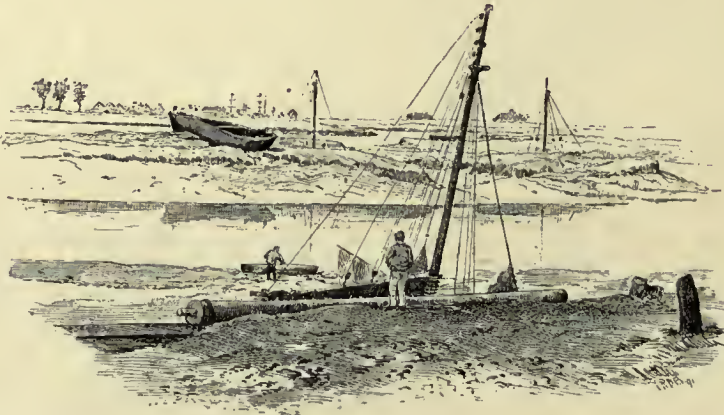
ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

dock, situated some way further down on our port bow. Astern some of the town-folk were beginning to wake up, dim lights from upper casements breaking the monotony of the grey dawn ; and the tower of St. Mary's Church, once a beacon, was pointing upwards with its outline almost lost in the mist. For the rest, Maldon was invisible in the gloom : the silence that reigned every-

where was broken only by the faint ripple of the waters under the bows of the boat. This church of St. Mary, which stands low down in the town near the river, is the oldest of the three churches in Maldon. From an architectural point of view there is nothing in it of any great importance, with the exception, perhaps, of the west door. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the tower fell, and as this tower was then a beacon, much inconvenience was caused to those who navigated the river. On the 16th of January, 1609, Thomas Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, writes from Bishops Waltham to Sir Thomas Lake, to further the petition of John Good, and other inhabitants of Maldon, for the rebuilding of their church. Curiously enough we find the house of this John Good searched for arms on the 3rd of December, 1625, by Sir John Lytcott and Francis Drake, who report thereon to the Council. Three years later a brief was issued by Charles I., authorizing the collection of subscriptions in various specified places in furtherance of the rebuilding. One copy of this brief still extant is endorsed as follows: "Collected in the church of Cowley towards this briefe May 3, two shillings. Daniel Collins parson of Cowley."

Now, though I had started with the intention of seeing what there was to be seen on the river and sketching whatever struck my fancy, I had also hope of a little sport. Hence my conversation with the skipper—a clever and experienced wild-fowler, by the way—soon drifted to the congenial topics of wild-fowl and their habits, fowling in general, and specially as to our prospects of sport that day. Those who have any experience

in wild-fowling need not be told that, except in hard weather, sport is always a great lottery; but one likes to chat about one's prospects. Shooting "yarns," too, are for the most part amusing, even when you mentally feel compelled to halve the range, and divide the total of the bag by three. We soon passed Northey Island, after which the real estuary begins, for there the river widens out to a mile or more in breadth. There were now signs of the dawn of day, and the flat, desolate patch known as



THE HYTHE AND PORT OF MALDON.

Osea Island was visible ahead. An old "frank" heron got up lazily from the bank as we glided slowly by, and methodically winged his way along to his next wonted resting-place.

The breeze now dropped almost entirely, and one seemed to feel the rawness of the early morning far more than at the start. Progress was, of course, very slow indeed, and the general desolation of the scene was increased by a feeling of utter stagnation. However, there were faint sounds in the distance, just as we breasted

Osea Island, which were welcome to our ears, and at once preparations were made for a possible expedition. The punt-gun was hoisted out from the little cabin and loaded, and the punt was made ready on deck. Guns, or as they seem to locally term them "hand-guns," in contradistinction to the big punt-gun, were taken from their cases and cartridges sorted out. Just at that instant, by one of those chances which so add to the charm of wild-fowling, the entirely unexpected occurred. A small flock of five curlew flew by comfortably within range. Handley (the skipper) and I



TOLLESBURY.

both fired, he once and I twice, missing with my second barrel. The birds fell in shallow water, and it required the services of our little boat astern to get them. Meanwhile a cloud of peewits, curlew, and gulls rose in the distance from the banks of a little creek, and vanished with cries both plaintive and discordant into the mist which hung about the shore. Presently on our port side we sighted in the dim distance a cluster of cottages standing beside a two-sailed windmill. This place is known as Mill-beach, and it furnished me with a sketch on the return journey. On this side of the estuary, not far inland, stands the village of Goldhanger,

and lower down that of Tollesbury. In the former of these there is still a wild-fowl decoy ; how few are now left in Essex ! Tollesbury is celebrated for its oyster-beds, of which more later on. Further inland are the three villages of Tolleshunt, severally designated D'Arcy, Knights, and Major, all of which I should gladly have revisited had it been possible on this occasion, as the churches and the ruins of Beckingham Hall are not a little interesting. Probably the earliest representation of a tulip on glass is, or was, to be found in the church of Tolleshunt D'Arcy.

By this time our thoughts turned towards breakfast, and off Stansgate Priory we "hove to" for that purpose, nothing loth. Our meal was a rough-and-ready one, but none the less acceptable. Breakfast over, I purposed to land at Stansgate to take a look at the remains of the Priory, which could be plainly seen from the water, amid surrounding corn-stacks fringed with trees, about two hundred yards behind the gun-boat hulk, which is now used as a coast-guard station. As a matter of fact, I did not land until my return, for birds were sighted in the far distance, and after scanning them through his glasses the skipper pronounced them to be "good birds." However, I may as well here say what there is to be said about Stansgate. This was a Clugniac Priory, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, and was a cell to the Priory of Lewes. The house was founded about the year 1176, and at the time of the suppression of the lesser monasteries possessed the manor of Stansgate, together with a water-wheel and mill. Its revenues were granted to Wolsey, and applied by him towards the endowment of his two colleges. The

remains of the old Priory are by no means extensive ; a building once seemingly the church, or a part of the church, is used as a barn. Possibly the present farm-house hard by was built with materials from the Priory, but externally there are no evidences of antiquity.

Meanwhile, the birds turned out to be a small bunch of teal, so it was decided to launch the punt, and three teal were the results of the shot, a fourth unfortunately managing to get off, though hard hit. The manœuvres necessary to circumvent the birds took a little time, for a punt, though neither a slow craft nor



BRADWELL POINT.

unhandy, requires a good deal of management. Rather lower down on the same side of the estuary we passed what is called Ramsey Island, though, as a matter of fact, at low water a road or causeway joins it to the mainland. Here, on the wide stretch of water, we had the luck to get a few black ducks after some little trouble ; so that, considering all things, sport being only an adjunct, we were disposed to be satisfied with the morning's performance. About noon we found ourselves abreast of a small, narrow, island marsh, known as Peewit Island, which immediately fronts the entrance to the creek leading to the village of Bradwell-juxta-Mare. Bradwell

lies some little distance inland, and is, except for its associations, a place of little interest. Mentioned in the "Domesday Survey" as Effecestre, it has also been identified as the site of Orthona. Bede and Ralph Niger speak of Ithancester, and their reference is probably to Bradwell. To have landed at Bradwell would have involved a long walk, following on a long row, for by this time the tide was down; besides, the Capella de la Val, or Chapel of St. Peter's on the Wall, could be more easily viewed from the sea.



MILL-BEACH, NEAR GOLDHANGER.

So we sailed round till the little chapel was visible, standing on the top of the sea wall. The parish of Bradwell is a very large one, and this spot would seem to be about the north-east corner of it. Originally St. Peter's was a chapel-of-ease to the parish church, the rector being compelled to furnish a priest to say mass there on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In the year 1442 the date of its foundation was already forgotten, nor had the name of the founder been preserved—this is gleaned from the finding of a jury,

then impannelled to inquire into its condition. At that time it had a chancel and nave, with a small tower containing two bells. It was ascertained that at some previous date the chapel had been burnt, the chancel and nave being subsequently repaired by the rector and the parish respectively.

On November 4, 1604, the Manor of Bradwell was granted to Sir Walter Mildmay and his heirs, in fee farm—a fact which is only interesting to us from events which we shall have to mention in another chapter. In 1637 the then rector, Giles Bury or Berrey, D.D., managed to get into trouble in connection with a tithe dispute. It appears that two of his parishioners, William Gaywood and William Byatt, professed that as they had paid tithe in “winter cheese” they were exempt from payment in “tithe hay, milk, and herbage of dry cattle.” A lawsuit followed, and here it may be observed that the previous rector, Dr. Tabor, had already fought and lost the case. Dr. Berrey forwarded a petition to the Council, in which it was afterwards alleged that he had “aspersed a court of justice,” etc., etc., with result that the Warden of the Fleet received warrant to attach his person. Eventually the unfortunate rector was compelled to eat humble pie, and on payment of all costs obtained his release. It is, however, to another cleric that Bradwell owes what little celebrity it has, and the chief incidents in the career of this remarkable man form a not uninteresting history. Henry Bate, afterwards the Rev. Sir H. Bate-Dudley, Baronet, was born in the little desolate fen parish of North Farnbridge (A.D. 1745), where his father was then rector. Bate seems to have entered at Queen’s College, Oxford, but it appears open to question whether he

ever took his degree. He subsequently took holy orders, and in due course succeeded his father at North Farnbridge. But the retirement of a country rectory suited him but little, and the greater portion of his time seems to have been passed in London. In the year 1773 the "Fighting Parson," as he was already nicknamed, became notorious owing to his participation in a disturbance at Vauxhall. Next he is heard of as curate to James Townley, the vicar of Hendon, a congenial spirit and the author of "High Life below Stairs." Bate became one of the earliest editors of *The Morning Post*, then, as now, a Tory Journal, and in this capacity was celebrated for his contributions to its columns. Quarrelling with the proprietors of the *Post*, however, in 1780, Bate started in the month of November the Liberal *Morning Herald*, and in the same year two other newspapers, one printed in French, styled *Courrier de l'Europe*, the other *The English Chronicle*. The next year Bate became acquainted with the interior of the King's Bench Prison, being committed for twelve months in consequence of a libel on the Duke of Richmond which had appeared in his paper. It was now that he bought the advowson of Bradwell for the sum of £1,500. In the year 1784 he assumed the name of Dudley. The absentee rector of Bradwell dying in 1797, Bate-Dudley presented himself to the living ; as a fact, he had acted as curate there for five years previously, during which time he had spent some £28,000 on rebuilding the church, erecting a house, and reclaiming land. Unfortunately for him, however, the Bishop of London was able to raise objections on the score of "simony," during the settlement of which the presentation of the living lapsed to the

Crown. Bate-Dudley was thus robbed of the cash expended and the fruits thereof, for the Crown presented the Chaplain-General of the Army to the living. A similar course had been taken in 1640, when the Crown presented Nicholas More to the rectory. It was certainly a very hard case, and public feeling was much in favour of Bate-Dudley. Some amends seem to have been made him by the gift of church preferment in Ireland, and in the year 1813 he was created a baronet. Sir Henry died childless in 1824. His portrait and that of Lady Dudley, by Gainsborough, until a few years ago, used to hang in the drawing-room of Bradwell Lodge, now the rectory. It is not often that a man can be found at once parson, duellist, journalist, dramatist, and wit, church builder and land reclaimer, courtier, political turncoat, and finally a baronet! At the time of the mutiny at the Nore an observatory built on the rectory roof was, it is said, of much service to the Government.

After passing the Capella de la Val, we turned the boat's nose seawards, in the hope that perhaps if fortune was gracious it might be possible to fall in with brent geese. Hereabouts is a favourite haunt of these birds, and on this particular day a flock was visible, though in the far distance, and quite out of reach. Owing to shallows and the state of wind and tide we deemed it advisable to make our way towards Mersea Island. This Island is divided into two parishes, East and West. It is separated from the mainland by the oyster-bearing Pyefleet Channel. East Mersea Church, of which the tower stands up boldly, is not of much interest. As to history connected with the island, a few curious particulars may be gleaned from various sources, as well as from the State Papers.

From the presence of Roman antiquities, its occupation in those early times is indubitable. Standing as it does at the mouth of two navigable rivers, in the days of Danish invasions Mersea became an important place, and here Alfred is stated to have besieged his natural enemies in 894.

Whether the island was or was not continuously fortified subsequent to that date there are no records to show, but we next read of the place in November, 1558, when the pay of the captain, officers, and men serving in the Blockhouse, East Mersea, Essex, was sadly in arrear. Sixty-seven years later we must suppose that the fortifications, whatever they might have been, were out of repair, for in a document sent by Robert, Earl of Warwick, to the Council, he reports that the county of Essex having paid between four and five thousand pounds towards the maintenance of troops refuses further payment "of such an excessive and unprecedented charge," and he advises the "fortification of Mersey." In the year 1648 the small fort was seized by the Parliamentarians, who placed it under the command of Captain William Burrell, often written Burriall, or Barrell. Burrell was an experienced soldier, and is first heard of twenty-five years before, when he was accused of peculation. The documents referring to Burrell are many and various. Like other military commanders in those times, he found a great difficulty in obtaining money for pay, fortification, and stores. In 1650 he is gladdened by the arrival of two iron guns and one brass one from Colchester.

The next year he receives orders to remove Israel Edwards, Minister, out of the island, and to supply that place with "another

able preacher." We shall meet with Edwards again. In 1653 the cost of turf for the fort amounted to £17 10s.; but it is recorded by the Governor Burrell, that in addition the inhabitants have, "out of good affection," supplied much gratis. Under date April 28, 1654, comes a petition from Arthur Ockley, preacher at West Mersea, to the Protector and Council. He asks to be confirmed in his place until further orders, as the old incumbent, Mr. Woolace, whose living was sequestered on account of scandalous conduct, is still alive; adding, that the parish was six or seven years without a minister, that it is very unhealthy, and only worth £40. Ockley states that he was invited there by Captain Burrell, the governor, two years previously, and that the parishioners desire his confirmation. It would seem that the petition was granted. On the 20th of October, 1655, Captain Burrell, who had been ordered to disband the troops at Mersea and to pay them, informs the Council that he has no money with which to do so, and that the men daily importune him for their arrears. He continues that he has been ordered to demolish Mersey fort and to pay the workmen out of the materials; but that James Shirley, of Clapham, owner of the ground, forbids his taking it down on pain of a common lawsuit. He concludes by asking for orders. How the matter ended we know not, nor what became of the prisoners then there, whose names are given, Henry Lernon of Stanaway Hall, W. Barradill, and Captain Barker, both of Colchester. Documents, however, prove that the island was occasionally garrisoned several years after 1655, viz., by a "company of well-affected volunteers" in 1659, and by a company of foot in 1667. As we

have before mentioned, both Mersea Island and Tollesbury are celebrated for their oyster-beds—a distinction likewise shared by the estuary of the Colne.

Our skipper held strong opinions on the subject of oysters; and, in addition, could express them with intelligence, and at times with no little force. Science, we are accustomed to think, has added much to our knowledge on most points, but, as far as we can gather by investigation, the report of Sir Henry Marten to



RAMSEY ISLAND.

the Council, dated July 6, 1638, gives as true a reason for the cause of the scarcity of oysters as could be furnished in the present day. He condemns “over-dredging,” and the taking of “broods and spats of oysters, and the shells on which they grow, from off the common oyster-grounds, and carrying them into private lannes where they die.” He adds that the Mayor of Colchester and the bailiffs of Maldon claim the waters of the Colne and the Ponte (Panta Stream), “where are the best brooding-places.” That they fish in

close season, "selling licences therefor." That dredging is a great evil, and that the engrossing of all the produce of the beds into the hands of a few fishmongers is fatal to prosperity. He also states that large quantities are exported, professedly under licence, to supply the Queen of Bohemia and the Prince of Orange. His suggestions are to limit the output to 1,000 half-barrels per week, and that, in addition, no fishmonger should be allowed to buy oysters till they had been brought to the common quay. It is gratifying to read that on receipt of this report the corporations of Colchester and Maldon were severely snubbed. At this period (1637) the duty on a bushel of oysters exported in their shells was 12d., while that on those "pickled" was 2d. a quart.

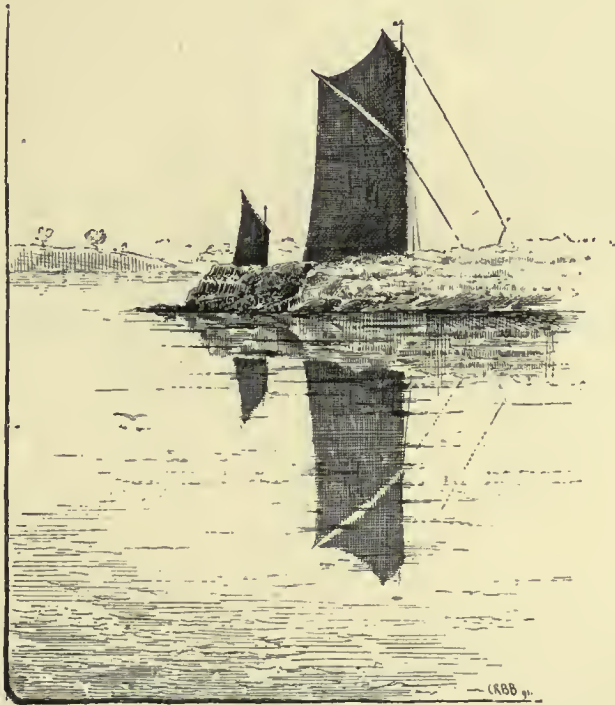
Sir Henry Marten's report induced the authorities to draw up the following regulations:—No oyster was to be taken henceforth off the common grounds in Essex and Kent (Faversham and Whitstable) "until they have twice shot, and shall have come to wear and half-wear." Permission to "barrel oysters" was withheld from all places in Essex save Colchester, Brightlingsea, and the places where the "best green oysters are bred." But the loophole for destructive greed was unfortunately left by the clause allowing export to the Queen of Bohemia and the Prince of Orange. The use of trawls had been previously, but ineffectually, forbidden, and the order to this effect appears to have been only partially obeyed, if we may judge from a petition of 500 fishermen of Barking. In this document the Lords of the Admiralty are informed that the petitioners have obeyed the proclamation prohibiting the use of the trawl, but that the fishermen of East and West Mearsh

(Mersea), and Burnham in Essex, together with those of Whitstable and Faversham in Kent, still pursue the old practice. The petitioners beg that either all should obey the proclamation, or that none should be forbidden to employ the "said engine." In the present day no doubt the native oysters are both scarce and dear, the income derived from the beds far less than it ought to be, or under proper management in the past would have been. Precautions are now taken, and we believe strictly taken, to preserve the beds, but it is an open question whether an almost entire prohibition of oyster-dredging for the space of, say, five years would not in the end be profitable.

The other fisheries in a similar manner are over-worked: fish about one-third the proper size—useless as articles of food—are permitted to be taken, or at any rate are taken. This should certainly be put a stop to, for this absolute eating up of capital caused by wilfully and needlessly squandering our food supply might be easily prevented.

By this time the afternoon had well advanced, and the wind, which had been light since the morning, almost entirely died away, thus rendering our progress very slow. Off Ramsey Island the dredgers were drifting about. In the distance we could see a couple of wildfowlers in their punts, making their way down to some favourite spot for the chance of a shot. Theirs is a hard life indeed, and is rendered all the harder by the reckless way in which people "on pleasure bent" fire at and into all sorts of birds, whether eatable or useless, within range or half a mile distant. The shameful selfishness of such persons, not to speak of the

disgraceful cruelty of their proceedings, cannot be sufficiently reprehended. By the promiscuous fusillade to which waterfowl are subjected few, it is true, are killed outright; many, however, are crippled, and escape only to die, while more still are driven to seek safer asylums afar. Thus the wildfowler is deprived of his



POLING UP.

means of subsistence; the flocks of geese, ducks, teal, &c., each year on the coasts and tidal waters are less and less in numbers.

We proceeded on our return journey slowly and uneventfully, having ample time to sketch the desolate "Mill Beach" as we sluggishly drifted along, tarrying to land for a few minutes only

at Stansgate Priory. Once indeed we took to the small boat and made an excursion up a creek after a large flock of plover, but without succeeding in getting within killing range. Presently we came within view of the port of Maldon, where the little cluster of masts showed signs of mourning, each flag being partly lowered on account, as we afterwards heard, of a death in the little hamlet. And now, when our journey ought to have been speedily finished, alas! the wind entirely failed, and we were compelled to "pole up" the remainder of the way—an operation which was already in progress on board a heavily-laden barge ahead of us. This barge made its way ultimately by the channel along the river, and came to its moorings near the railway station. I took a sketch of it as it was rounding a spit, and on the morrow, finding it moored near to a rather picturesque old lime-kiln, I took the view which forms the etching belonging to this chapter. On the Hythe, from which I started in the morning, I sketched the distant view of the port lying surrounded by creeks, marshes, saltings, and mud. Hereabouts, though the houses are not of the most modern type, yet, as is the case in the whole of Maldon, they lack picturesqueness; in fact, there is simply nothing to sketch save a peep of the tower of the St. Mary's Church. Thus, in the gathering twilight, ended my very pleasant day on the Blackwater.



CHAPTER III.

BARKING.

BARKING in ancient days was a place renowned through the length and breadth of the land. The site of an abbey of great sanctity (for at least five of the abbesses received the honours of canonization)—a retreat of queens and royal personages—it was the most aristocratic as well as the earliest of nunneries. In later times the abbess, a baroness in right of station, took precedence over those of the other convents possessing a similar distinction—Wilton, Shaftesbury, and St. Mary's, Winchester—and furnished a quota of men-at-arms equivalent to thirteen and a half knights' fees—a fact which tells the tale of the wealth and importance of this religious house. As a place of education for both boys and girls of exalted rank, the reputation of the convent stood very high. Now, alas! its very name has passed away, and the only architectural relic of the once powerful Abbey is an outer gateway, locally styled "Firebell" Gate. This is somewhat strange when one reflects that the names of little unimportant alien priories dissolved as far back as the year 1414 still cling to many of their remains yet existing, whether it be only some solitary arch standing sentinel in the midst of a field, or a barn, the fragment of

what was once a church. For religious houses which were never wealthy, which never had a history, sometimes, despite the wear and tear of time, have contrived to preserve at least their names down to the present day—their ruins being, as it were, gravestones ; their names monumental inscriptions.

The Abbey of Barking was founded in the year 670 by St. Erkenwald, the first bishop of the then newly-established diocese of London, and was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, Ethelburge, or Edilburge, the sister of the bishop, becoming the first abbess. Of Erkenwald it is related that towards the end of his long life, when incapacitated by old age and weakness, rather than abandon his episcopal work, he caused himself to be carried in a litter through his diocese, and that on one of these expeditions he fell sick at Barking and died there. The possession of the body of so holy a man became, as not infrequently happened, the subject of a dispute, Barking, Chertsey, and London being the rival claimants for the honour of entombing him. Eventually the matter was decided in favour of his cathedral, and as on the road between Barking and London two miracles were reported to have been performed by the body of the departed bishop, the decision was held to be eminently satisfactory. That marvels happened at the tomb of the bishop subsequently nobody will be astonished to read. Finally, during the reign of King Stephen, a gorgeous shrine of silver gilt, ornamented with gems, was prepared at the east end of St. Paul's, and the body of Erkenwald translated from its first resting-place thereto. On the death of Abbess Ethelburge, a successor was found in Hildelitha, a nun, who it appears had

instructed the late abbess in her duties. During the first half of the eighth century several abbesses of royal blood ruled over Barking, the last of these being the wife of Ina, who possibly retired to Barking when her husband withdrew to Rome. For a hundred and twenty years the history of the abbey is wanting, but in 870 it seems to have been attacked by the Danes, who burnt it, either killing the nuns or driving them into hiding-places.

As an act of expiation the ruins were rebuilt by Edgar during the third quarter of the tenth century, and the erring Wulfhilda, a nun of Wilton, was appointed abbess. During her rule a dispute arose with some priests, which was ultimately referred to the widow of Edgar for settlement. This lady, who, under the circumstances, could be hardly likely to regard Wulfhilda with favourable eyes, ejected the abbess and usurped her place for the space of twenty years. It is, however, related that in order to stay a pestilence which had broken out, Wulfhilda was eventually recalled. Her adventures, nevertheless, were not yet over, for Barking was so harried by the Danes that abbess and nuns retired to London, where the former died in the odour of sanctity, being subsequently canonized.

Edith, the queen of Henry I., whose name was changed to Maud, or Matilda, on her marriage, passed the last years of her life as abbess of Barking. Her history was somewhat remarkable, as in her youth, she, a king's daughter, had been confided by her father Malcolm, of Scotland, to the care of her aunt, the abbess of Wilton. The political reasons which prompted Henry to desire a marriage with the niece of Edgar the Etheling were obvious, but a

difficulty arose. While at Wilton, Edith had, it would appear, worn the veil, though it was alleged she had never taken the vows. Ultimately, the ecclesiastical authorities permitted the marriage to take place. Abbess Maud built the bridge at Bow.

It is, perhaps, but fair to add that the monastery at Westminster also lays claim to having been the place of retirement of Maud, but the balance of probability is in favour of Barking. Similarly Romsey Abbey has been stated as the place of her education, the name of the abbess being given as Christina. Maud, the queen of Stephen, is reputed for a brief time to have exercised the functions of abbess, resigning office in favour of Adeliza, who in her turn was succeeded by Mary, the sister of Thomas à Becket—an appointment probably made by Henry II. as a kind of set-off against the decree of banishment, under which the family of the archbishop had been driven from the kingdom. Meanwhile, the abbey had been increasing in wealth and power, and so continued to increase for two centuries, when great losses were sustained through floods.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century the income of the house was sadly diminished. Huge sums were spent during the first ten years of the fifteenth century in an endeavour by means of embankments to keep out the waters. But these efforts were fruitless, and in 1410 the ladies of the abbey had none of them more than an annual income of 14s. In consequence of their poverty they successfully petitioned to be exempted from any taxes. After the murder of the Duke of Gloucester his duchess retired to Barking, and there died in 1399. The last abbess of



The Firebell Gate - Barking.

this great and celebrated Benedictine House was by name Dorothy Barley, who, together with thirty other nuns, signed the deed of surrender, November 8, 1539. Pensions were granted, the amount being 200 marks in the case of the abbess, the others receiving smaller annuities. The "Firebell Gate," the sole relic of the abbey, now forms the entrance to the churchyard. Beneath the archway iron gates, ever jealously locked, entirely shut out the passer-by, and as it requires some research to find the keeper of the keys, an inspection of the church is not always easily to be managed. Why churches and graveyards should be in so many places scrupulously locked up passes comprehension. This gateway, which from its appearance may be safely ascribed to the fourteenth century, is interesting from the fact that the upper room was formerly a chapel, and is, indeed, mentioned in an old document as "the chapel of the Holy Rood lofte atte-gate edified to the honour of Almighty God, and of the Holy Rood." On one wall there still remains a very mutilated carving representing the crucifixion. Amongst the documents yet existing which belong to the abbey are not a few of a quaint nature. Some of the tenures by which small tenants held of the abbey are singularly curious, and may be read in the Harleian MSS. In the Cottonian MSS. is preserved "the charge longynge to the Office of Cellarress of Barking"—a careful and elaborate recital of the sums to be collected, together with particular information as to the cooking of the lengthy list of provisions named therein. The good ladies must have been supposed to possess tolerably fair appetites, as twice a year at least, *i.e.*, on the Feast of the Assumption, and also on St.

Alburgh's Day, each nun was allowed no less than half a goose. It appears that the name "Firebell Gate" originated from a custom of ringing a bell, which yet remains in the turret; and in a document we find "a direction made by special counsell for my Lady Abbess, answer to the parishioners of Berkynge." The old bell, the parishioners urged, was "crasid and fectief," and they wished for a new one; they also requested to be permitted to repair the roof of the tower.

The abbess is advised by "counsell" to permit a new bell to be hung, provided that it be of the same weight as the old one; but it is added that "persons of kunyng had searched it and reported it not to be crasid or fectief." Permission to repair the roof was, however, to be refused, it being alleged that the parish church and chapel of St. Margaret were in ruins, and that these "by God's law they were bound" to keep in proper repair first. Whether the St. Margaret, to whom the church was dedicated, was Margaret of Antioch or Margaret Queen of Scotland is not known. Probably, however, she is to be identified with Margaret of Scotland, who was the mother of Queen Maud (Edith) and sister of the Abbess Christina. The history (for it is no legend) of St. Margaret is full of interest, and is well worthy of perusal. She died in 1093, and was canonized by Innocent IV. in 1251. For some reason unknown Innocent XII. changed her festival-day from November 16th, the day of her death, to the 10th of June. Her body, with that of her husband, was removed by stealth, after the Reformation, from Dunfermline to Spain, and a chapel having been prepared in the Escorial by Philip II., therein,

side by side, lie St. Malcolm, King, and St. Margaret, Queen. There is a tradition, however, that the head of the saintly Queen was abstracted in transit and deposited in the Scotch Jesuit Church at Douay.

Externally the church at Barking is not remarkable for its beauty, with the exception, perhaps, of its tower. The interior, however, is full of interest of a certain kind. There are several brasses, two of them being of the fifteenth century. A niche in one of the piers at the west end of the nave is very ornate, unusual in detail, and of an uncommon form. The south side of the church, within and without, is simply hideous; but on the north one comes across a singular patchwork of fragments and styles, while the insertions are too numerous to mention. One thing about the interior of St. Margaret's immediately forces itself upon the eye, and that is the large number of columns visible. I have never seen so many in so small a church.

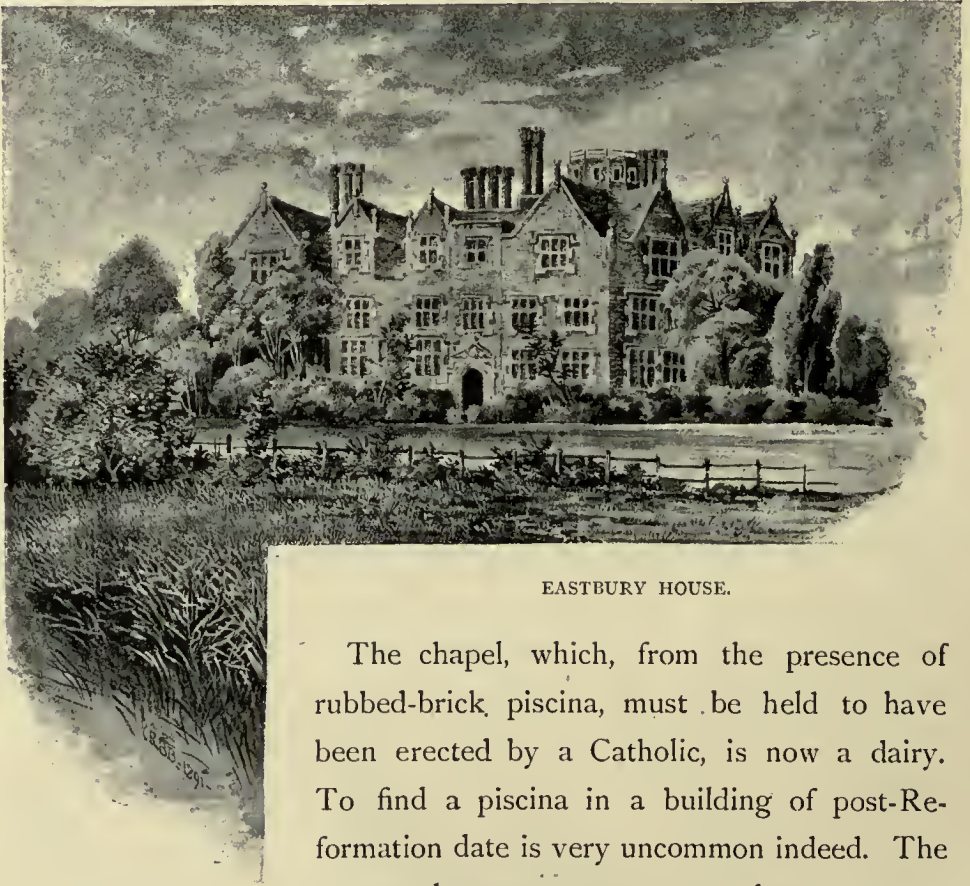
A few entries referring to Barking occur in the State Papers which are worth mention. In the year 1664 the church required a minister, and the inhabitants forwarded a petition, in which they prayed that a certain Thomas Cartwright should be appointed to the vacant office. Apparently this petition was granted, as on the 23rd of February in the next year Cartwright complains to Sir William Batten (the friend of Pepys) that he has been much injured by a drunken innkeeper, named John Barnard, of Barking, who, being the purser of the *Henrietta* pinnace, "is confident of not being arrested or called to account for it." Cartwright begs for counsel and assistance towards obtaining a remedy at common law.

The *Henrietta* was at that time acting as watch-boat, and there are many references to its "staying" boats that had used trawls or had illegally taken in a freight of oysters. Often the unfortunate fishermen had never heard, or alleged that they had never heard, of the various proclamations concerning trawls and oysters. Their innocence, however, is much open to question. A rather amusing letter from Sir Richard Plumleigh (dated March 21, 1634) to Nicholas, the secretary, narrates how his vessel, the *Bonaventure*, in company with the East Indian Fleet, has been some weeks delayed by contrary winds in the Hope. He rather plaintively adds that he is "sick of delay," and winds up with the news that "All our fishermen at Barking come drunk by daily, with the wrack-sack of a Malaga ship cast away last Saturday about the buoy in the Red Sands." In 1649 two Barking vessels, belonging to Gates Naylor and Edmund Emson, fishermen, were rescued from the Irish by Captain Copping. These are ordered to be appraised, and their owners are to give security to abide by the sentence of the Admiralty Court, and then to have the vessels back. Presumably this was some question of salvage or reward to Captain Copping and his crew. Felton, the murderer of Buckingham, when he left his lodgings in London for the purpose of his crime, announced to his landlord and landlady, who were the servants of the Warden of the Fleet, that he was going to the house of Sir William Fitch, at Barking. With what ingenuity the local constables in the seventeenth century could construe the simplest remarks into treasonable utterances is frequently apparent, and from the triviality of most of these reports

to the Council, one can but conclude either that the Jacks-in-office were utterly devoid of intelligence, or (which is more probable) sought to advance themselves and at the same time pay off their private grudges. A case in 1634, which was brought up owing to a conversation relative to a slight disturbance at the execution of two Frenchmen, might be quoted did space permit. The religious condition of Barking in the year 1655 seems to have excited the attention of the authorities, and one Major Hezekiah Haynes is ordered to inquire about and suppress a meeting proposed to be held there for "holding and defending blasphemous opinions against the Deity of Christ."

In the High Street of Barking, not far from the church, is an old Elizabethan building, now used as a town-hall. Outside the town, in the direction of Dagenham, and perhaps a mile from the railway station, stands Eastbury House, the subject of my sketch. This handsome old mansion, despite the terrible condition of decay into which it has fallen at the present time, requires more than a passing notice. Built by Sir William Denham, in the reign of Queen Mary, it remains externally, for the most part, in its original condition, the exception being that one of the two octagonal towers in the courtyard has fallen. The many-pinnacled gables, clustering ornamental chimneys, and multitude of stone-mullioned windows, are very picturesque. Within, however, with the exception of a few rooms, this huge house is a scene of desolation. Fireplaces, carving, panelling, and oak floors have been ruthlessly done away with; hardly a ceiling remains in the major part of the building, and from above or below a gridiron

of floor joists meets the eye. The staircase has vanished, and a common modern substitute fronts the quaint rubbed-brick entrance door. The ball-room or gallery still has a floor, being used as a hay-loft, and in it is a much-mutilated fireplace.



EASTBURY HOUSE.

The chapel, which, from the presence of rubbed-brick piscina, must be held to have been erected by a Catholic, is now a dairy. To find a piscina in a building of post-Reformation date is very uncommon indeed. The octagonal tower presents more than one peculiarity: in the first place the newel stair is entirely of oak, the central column being also formed of huge tree trunks. At the top of this stair the original quaint old balusters re-

main, and the tradition of the place is that from the summit of the tower the gunpowder conspirators hoped to see the flash and hear the report on the accomplishment of their design. Doubts have, of course, been cast upon the story that a good deal of this plot was contrived at Eastbury. In those days of panic no doubt many an innocent Catholic house and Catholic family fell under suspicion. The coming or going of a few strangers to the locality was considered almost *primâ facie* evidence of something treasonable. But Eastbury may have been one of the many houses of meeting used by the little band of desperate fanatics or it may not; and indisputable evidence, at any rate, remains to show that Guido Fawkes had dealings in Barking of a nature accounted treasonable in those days. On the November 9, 1605, Sir Nicholas Coote forwards to Salisbury the examination of a fisherman of Barking, by name Richard Franklin. The document is in two parts, the first mentioning the transport of goods and soldiers to Calais on behalf of one Richard Fuller, the second giving an account of Fawkes *alias* Johnson hiring a boat from Franklin's master, Henry Paris, of Barking, to carry him with another disguised man to Gravelines, and stating that, having done so, they waited there six weeks to bring the strangers back. Beyond this there is nothing to connect Barking with the plot, and it is possible that the tradition arose from some distorted version of the evidence, in which the trip to Gravelines was tacked on to the advent of stranger visitors to the Catholic house of Eastbury. Mention has been made of the carvings, panels, &c., which once adorned

this old mansion. A good many of them are still in existence, and are to be found about two miles distant, in Parsloes, the seat of the Fanshaw family. Parsloes is a quaint, rambling house, with a tower at one end, in a beautiful old-fashioned garden. The interior, thanks to the spoils from Eastbury, contains many a piece of good carving, and is specially rich in fireplaces of the date of that house. The entrance hall, with its multiplicity of small panels and heavily-beamed ceiling, is a charming room. The library, which when I visited the place still contained not a few volumes, though the house was unoccupied, is a large and lofty chamber with a coved roof. Amongst other things may be seen in the kitchen a huge fireplace arch with shields in the spandrels bearing charges which would fix its origin, even if tradition were silent on the point. The Manor of Barking was sold to Sir Thomas Fanshaw by Charles I., and from documents still existing the various steps in the negotiation can be traced with ease. One need not go into the whole story, but one paper puts the conduct of the King in a most favourable light. It is an autograph letter from Charles to the Lord Treasurer and others, in which he states that Fanshaw had advanced to him £2,500 respecting Barking Manor on imperfect security. That he does not consider this just, and bids them conclude a proper bargain for its sale. In this action, at least, the behaviour of the King was strictly that of a man of honour.

The fondness of Charles I. for the good old game of bowls is well known, and to indulge in his favourite pastime, casting all State aside, he was wont often to visit Barking, where at the Hall

dwelt one Mr. Shute. The stakes were usually high, and on one particular occasion, when luck had been heavily against him, the King declined to continue the game. Mr. Shute suggested that fortune might change, when the King, laying his hand gently on the shoulder of his host, replied: "Thou hast won the day, and much good may it do thee; but I must remember I have a wife and children;" and Mr. Shute said no more. The chronicler of this anecdote is careful to inform the reader that when Charles lost he "always paid!"

Rather in a meditative mood—for a visit to any historic spot cannot fail to call up associations and memories of the past—I made my way from Parsloes by devious paths and lanes, leading through market gardens innumerable, towards the little station at Chadwell Heath, stopping for an instant to gaze at the queer gateway of a house which is formed of the two huge jaw-bones of a whale. The story goes that these have been in the same position ever since the days of Richard Cromwell the Protector, and that the monster itself was washed ashore in the Thames during the terrific storm which occurred on September 2, 1658, the day prior to that "Fortunate Day," the anniversary of Worcester and Dunbar.



CHAPTER IV.

SIBLE AND CASTLE HEDINGHAM.

THE villages of Sible and Castle Hedingham are rich in antiquarian interest. Castle Hedingham teems with relics and memories of the once-powerful house of Vere, whose Norman keep yet stands, firm and massive, on its tree-girt mound, dominating, as of old, the many-hued gables of the quaint village which clusters round the church at its foot. Sibil—or to adopt the more modern and usually-accepted mode of spelling—Sible-Hedingham, lies bowered in foliage upon the other side of the Colne Valley Railway, a short two miles to the west, and is memorable as the birth-place of Sir John de Hawkwood, a man of whom it has been written that he was “the first real general of modern times.” The village of Sible-Hedingham is one of those remote spots of which the beauty is but little known to the outside world. Now and then a wandering artist discovers its charms of colour; for colour is its particular attraction. Learned societies at times view its church, but seldom penetrate into the village itself—a village so far away from the times that the tip-tap of the flail may yet be heard resounding from the threshing-floor. Even here, however, the use of the flail is

dying out ; it is now the implement of the aged labourers, for the younger men disdain to learn how to wield it. Decaying oast-houses, somewhat different in type from those of Kent and Sussex, tell the tale of the hop-gardens of Essex that are now no more. In this district the cultivation of the hop (once so celebrated) died hard, but the last hop-garden has now disappeared, never to be revived. In Sible-Hedingham village, not a few of the cottages bear their dates cut in stone—cottages whose walls and roofs are richly coloured by long, time-grown lichens—where many a rough pattern scored on the plaster, weather-beaten and stained, gives variety to what would otherwise be a plain surface. Trees abound fine, well-grown timber, and form a fitting background to the dwellings in the village street ; dwellings whose little gardens are bright with masses of brilliant flowers which hereabouts grow in wild profusion and intensify the general effect of vivid colour. Sible-Hedingham is in truth a restful spot, from which the trimness and neatness of the modern “model” village is happily absent. Why should a labourer’s house in these last years of the nineteenth century be constructed so as to violate every canon of architectural propriety externally ? Why should a strange compound of “Queen Anne” and “Tudor” be deemed the most appropriate style, or admixture of styles, for a village dwelling ? Is a pseudo-fifteenth-century house the fitting location for the village post-office and general shop ? These modern antiques seldom rise to the dignity of respectable reproductions of well-known existing examples ; they are, by their incongruities and feeble, though garish, attempts at ornamentation, an offence to the eye as well as to the common sense, to say nothing

of the much vaunted artistic feeling of the present day. To the memory of the grand old builders of the past they are simply an insult. But from excrescences such as these Sible-Hedingham is luckily spared. So one may wander down to the quaint old mill at the lower end of the straggling street, may linger by the water side, here bright with waving blooms, there edged with rustling reeds or spiky sedge, musing idly in the atmosphere of peace, or planning an expedition thither at some future date with canvas, colour, and brush. Then, passing back again, with new glimpses of the street from fresh points of view, one may make one's way up the hill at the other end—there are hills, and steep ones, too, in Essex—where above a bank stands a lonely house. Climb up the bank now, and get a view of the old keep of Hedingham Castle in the distance on the opposite side of the valley—the upward stroll will not have been taken without a reward for the exertion.

The church of Sible-Hedingham, which is dedicated to St. Peter, stands on rising ground just outside the village. It is large, but externally, with the exception of the tower, which is here and there marked with Hawkwood "hawks," it possesses no feature of special excellence. The general appearance of the building points to its erection in the latter half of the fourteenth century, but closer examination shows, from the presence of Roman tile in the walls, that in all probability the shell of the building ought to be ascribed to a much earlier date. The interior of the church would be quite uninteresting were it not for the south aisle, in which stands what is left of the tomb or, as some have held, the cenotaph of Sir John de Hawkwood. In this same aisle there is also some

fair carving in the roof and porch. Sir John's tomb takes the shape of a well-designed canopy with crockets, above an arched recess. The carving includes heraldic badges among its decorations, *i.e.*, hawks, a boar, etc. But, as the tomb is so fragmentary, it is almost impossible to conjecture what its original appearance may have been. The dispute as to whether Hawkwood was really buried at Sible-Hedingham, or whether the erection there was merely a cenotaph, has now been decided in favour of his native place, and, as far as probability goes, rightly decided, for in 1395, at the especial request of Richard II., the Florentine Republic (in whose service Hawkwood was at the time of his death), gave permission to the widowed Dame Hawkwood to transport to England the body of her late husband. There is no record that she did so, and a tomb exists at Florence, but a chantry was founded at Sible-Hedingham for the benefit of the soul of the departed warrior. Moreover, the son of Sir John certainly returned to Essex shortly after his father's death, resided there, and was naturalized as an Englishman in 1407.

Here a few lines giving an account of the life of the famous soldier ought most certainly to be inserted. He was born at Sible-Hedingham, and was the second son of Gilbert de Hawkwood, of that place, a man of good blood, and also a wealthy tanner. Tradition has it that Sir John was once an archer in the army of Edward III. The first known date is 1359, when he was in Gascony, at the head of a band of free-lances, living by pillage, especially the pillage of the clergy. From that time until the last two years of his life, with hardly a respite, Hawkwood was engaged

in war, either as a mercenary or a freebooter. But with him freebooting became a science ; he disciplined his band, which was known by the name of the White Company, and sometimes attained in numbers to the dignity of a small army. Inured to war and hardships, splendidly mounted and equipped, and with a discipline rare in those days, it is not to be wondered that this brave, though decidedly unscrupulous, body of men became a power in Southern Europe. They could, in fact, demand their own terms.

But the keystone of the arch was Hawkwood himself, who appears to have possessed splendid talents for organization, and a genius for recovery after defeat. These, added to his rough-and-ready strategy, rendered him the foremost commander of his age. The catalogue of services into which the free-lance entered is endless. At one time he levied contributions on Pope Innocent VI. ; at another he was engaged against the French ; again, in the service of John Paleologus, the Marquis of Monferrato, he ravaged Lombardy and Piedmont, raiding castles and towns, holding their noble captives to ransom, and desolating the districts of the Po from Novara to Pavia and Tortona. These wars seem to have been greatly waged by mercenaries, for we find Hawkwood in frequent conflict with other bands of free-lances. In 1363, when he was in the service of the Republic of Pisa, he marched against Florence, but failed to take the place. He retired, but returned again ; and after some success, succeeded in burning one of the suburbs of the city. This is not, however, the place to give a lengthy account of the details of the old soldier's life, nor to describe *seriatim* his

successes and failures, victories and defeats : for such information his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography* should be consulted. Suffice it to say that, however he may have behaved towards some of those into whose service he entered, to the Florentine Republic he was, in the main, faithful.

Like most soldiers of fortune, he was in an almost chronic state of debt and difficulty, despite the huge sums of money which he received as pay or in the shape of bribes and ransoms. During the last years of his life he was a pensioner of the Republic of Florence, but a pensioner who was treated with the utmost respect and honour. He died in 1394, and was magnificently buried by the Republic in the Duomo.

Hawkwood is said to have been married twice ; but the date of his first marriage, if there ever were a first marriage, and the name of his first wife are unknown. His second wife was Donnina, the natural daughter of Bernabò Visconti, and by her he had one son, John, and three daughters. Other previous children are mentioned in lives of Hawkwood, but whether legitimate or not can never now be determined.

So vague is the history of this extraordinary man, that it is impossible to discover whether he ever was really knighted. He always held that rank, but when or where he won his knighthood is not to be discovered. Strangely enough, after such a life of adventure, Hawkwood seems in his latter years to have wished to return to his Essex home, and he even took steps towards carrying out his desire ; but, as has been stated, he died at Florence.

Probably no other English soldier of fortune ever raised himself to such a pitch of professional reputation as did Sir John Hawkwood of Sible-Hedingham. The male line of this ancient family is now believed to be extinct. The three daughters of Donnina married foreigners. Two of the other daughters married Englishmen—Antiocha, or Mary, became the wife of Sir William de Coggeshall, Beatrice that of John Shelley, M.P. for Rye between 1415 and 1423, an ancestor of the present Shelley family.

The old manor house has long been destroyed. It is believed to have stood in the centre of the village—possibly on the site of the present large red brick mansion. It would appear that there formerly existed in the parish a hostelry for pilgrims, with a chantry attached ; but the relics are very scanty.

As you pass up the street of Castle Hedingham, the evidences of antiquity are many and various. In one or two cases the gables of houses evidently either new or rebuilt are decorated with barge-boards of undoubted antiquity. Further on, through open casement or unlatched door may be seen oaken beams, quaint archways, and other traces of domestic work in their original position. Almost everywhere, if there be carved detail at all, it takes the form of the Vere badges. One house, in particular, now used as a butcher's shop, has some very interesting brackets, with mullet and other devices carved thereon.

The interior of this house (as of several others in the place), is quite worth attention, and it is a thing to note that the oak work has been very creditably kept in good condition. Many an ancient panel of rudely-scored plaster may be seen on the outsides

of the houses, and in this district of the county the number of patterns thus employed is very great. Perhaps the most picturesque portion of the village street is that in which a view of the brick tower of the church may be obtained peeping up behind a group of red-tiled cottage gables, all different in size—gables which in some cases are supported by heavy brackets, and of which the walls, seen in profile, lean more than ordinarily from the perpendicular.

In old coaching days Castle Hedingham must have done a fair trade as a stopping-place, if the remains of the stabling at the "Bell Inn" are any criterion. It was at this house that the Hinckford Conservative Club used to meet, and the room is yet to be seen ; but beyond a stamped plaster ceiling of no particular merit, there is nothing to record of the apartment which is dignified by the name of the "big room upstairs." The church of St. Nicholas, Castle Hedingham, is very interesting, and on the whole handsome, despite the fact that its original tower was replaced in 1616 by one of red brick. One cannot, of course, do other than regret this loss, still, of its kind, the tower is good, and seen from where you will, has a picturesque appearance. On the exterior of the south porch are the remains of a stoup, and inside the church by the same door is one of very curious form and decoration. It is square, standing on a circular half column ; at the base of the stoup is carved a reversed mask, from the sides and mouth of which radiates a well-known Norman pattern. This south porch door has, by tradition, the relics upon it of a human skin, with which it was formerly covered. This may, or may not, be a

fact, but the door is certainly one of great antiquity, and its planks are dovetailed together in a very remarkable manner. The skin covering, of which no traces are now apparent, must have been kept in place by the very curious hammered iron scroll-work which yet remains, but, alas! sadly corroded. This scroll-work is noteworthy from the presence upon one of its bands of a modelled dragon, placed as if crawling along in an endeavour to climb on to the upper edge. The clere story windows on the outside are surmounted by the Vere badges of the mullet and boar, and from the rubbed-brick mouldings would seem to be of the same date as the brick tower. From the general appearance of the Norman arches in the nave, and the other Norman work in the church, one would be inclined to ascribe the date of the church to the time of King John at the earliest. The columns in the nave are alternately circular and octagonal, with heavy and rather uncommon capitals. The rood-screen, apparently fourteenth-century work, is a fair example of such screens, and the carved oak roof is decidedly good. In tombs the church is singularly lacking, considering its situation. It was not the usual family burial-place of the Veres, though Hedingham Castle was their chief dwelling-place. A beautiful monument to one of the Earls, however, stands in the chancel. It is that of John, the fifteenth Earl of Oxford, Lord of Bolbec, Sampford, and Seams, Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII., Great Chamberlain of England, Knight of the Garter, and Privy Councillor, who died in 1539. The monument, which is beautifully carved on its top and sides, is built of black marble. Upon the top are the recumbent figures of

the Earl and his Countess cut in relief, and also the family arms with their many quarterings encircled by the garter. The effigies of their four sons and four daughters, kneeling before open books, are represented on the sides. On this tomb the execution of the costumes is wonderfully delicate, and the whole is in excellent preservation. Two slabs to Governors or Constables of the Castle are also in the church, one to John Robson, constable (1468), the other to William Bolton (1550). On the occasion of my last visit to Castle Hedingham (September, 1891), the west window of the church was under careful and judicious repair; it sadly needed it. There are also some remains of inscriptions to be seen on the western face of the tower, probably the names of masons and others who had been concerned in former repairs. Previous to the year 1190, it seems that a nunnery for black veiled nuns existed in Hedingham. According to tradition the building was the work of Alberic the first Earl, while the endowment was the gift of Lucia, his countess, who subsequently became the first prioress. The nunnery was dedicated to God, St. Mary, St. James, and the Holy Cross. Of this religious house a few walls may yet exist in the street known as Nunnery Street, but an absolute identification of its site and extent is now well-nigh impossible.

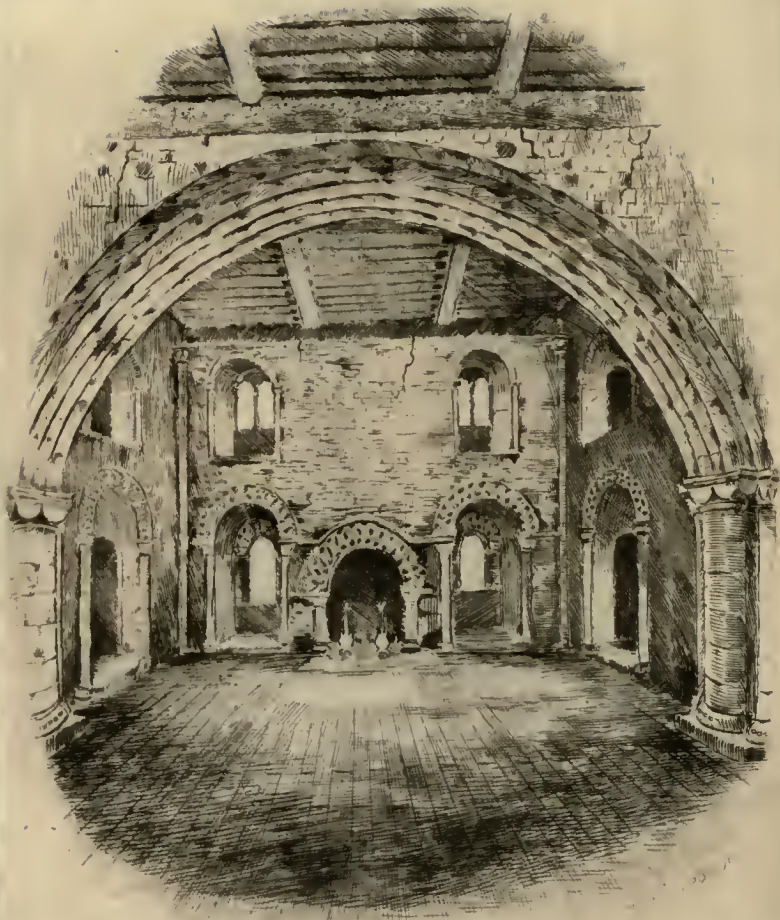
Of interesting houses in the vicinity of the village may be mentioned Kirby Hall and Little Lodge Farm. The former was attached to the estate called "Picards," which was held in 1360 under the seventh Earl of Oxford by Nicholas Hawkwood and Nicholas Picard. To every Englishman the grim old Thames

side tower, the work of the architect Monk Gundulf, with its eight centuries of historic and deeply tragic memories, must ever hold the first place among the Norman keeps which yet remain. Though it was mutilated in the most brutal manner by Wren, despoiled of its windows, and much of its vaulting cased with brick, yet it is the largest keep in existence, and, moreover, the



THE KEEP, HEDINGHAM CASTLE.

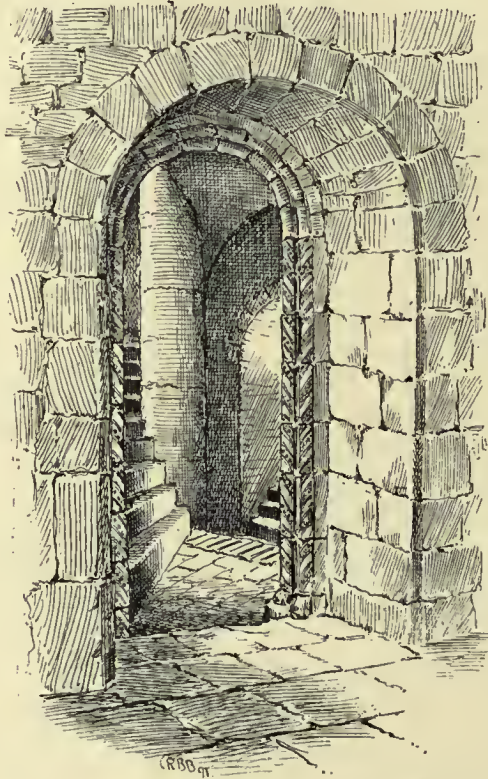
grand chapel of St. John within it can nowhere be matched. Newcastle and Dover both can boast of their Norman keeps, and the ruins of Rochester are a poem in stone. But to these Hedingham Castle may be compared, much to its own advantage, for it is by far the most perfect. Massively built of rubble-work, cased with finely-squared stone, apparently Barnack, its walls are from



*Interior of the Keep,
Heddingham Castle.*

ten to twelve feet in thickness. Its height is rather over a hundred feet, and the ground plan measures sixty-two by fifty-five. Like the White Tower it had corner turrets, of which two have completely vanished: one, the N.W. corner, is tolerably perfect, while that on the N.E. has been only partly demolished. The upper portions of these turrets were finished off with flint work, as may be seen on that at the N.W. angle. The original Norman doorway, with its heavy zig-zag mouldings, is still the entrance to the interior. The small and narrow windows in the lower portion increase in size above, while those which open on to the gallery of the great hall are in pairs, ornamented with bold zig-zag mouldings. The whole character of the building is massive. In order to convert the basement into a shed or storehouse, a large opening was cut through the wall some years ago in a very brutal manner—a work which must have cost more for labour than the shed could ever have been worth. The grand hall, spanned in the middle by a noble arch, is simply unique. A gallery which is built in the thickness of the wall, and pierced with openings looking into the hall, runs round it on all sides except the south. These openings are lighted by the pairs of windows before mentioned. The interior of the hall measures thirty-eight feet by thirty-one feet, its height to the beams being about twenty-eight feet, while to the crown of the arch it is some seven feet less. At nearly all of the windows recesses in the wall have been constructed, both in the gallery and on the floor. The fireplace, rarely to be found in so perfect a state, stands in the centre of the south side. Of the appearance of this half of the hall the etching will give a fair

idea. The circular staircase of the keep runs up the south-west turret, and from it branch off, where needed, small flights of steps, in the manner indicated in one of the sketches.



ENTRANCE TO THE GALLERY, HEDINGHAM CASTLE.

This sketch shows the entrances to the gallery on the north and west sides, the archway with its moulded pillars (the only decorated pillars in the building) being that on the western face. The caps of the various columns are plain in decoration, and do

not call for any special remark. At the back of the fireplace Roman tile has been worked in, but as far as can be ascertained this is the only place in which that material has been employed in the building. The upper floors do not present any features of particular mark, but the view from the roof is, as may be supposed, exceedingly fine. Outside on the western face may be seen marks showing that buildings once existed which completely covered the entrance. On the level plateau which formed the inner bailey of the castle, and in which the keep stands, will be seen traces of the foundations of some of the former castle offices, and on the north side is a large well. Without a doubt the mound upon which the keep stands has been in parts artificially raised. Everything points in this direction. There is nothing left of the former fortifications beyond earthworks, which are planted with trees and shrubs growing in wild profusion, as in the dry moat.

Having thus described Hedingham Castle as it is, let us add a few notes upon the noble family of Vere, incidentally mentioning a few facts which bear upon the history of the castle, and the times in which it stood intact in all its magnificence. In the General Survey Alberic de Vere is named as holding Kensington and Hedingham. He became, towards the end of his life, a member of some religious order, died in 1088, and was buried in Colne Priory. His son and successor, also named Alberic, was Great Chamberlain of England in the reign of Henry I., being appointed to that honour in the room of the banished Robert Malet, Lord of the Honour of Eye in Suffolk. Alberic de Vere was slain in the reign of Stephen, during the course of a riot

in London. His son Aubrey de Vere was confirmed in his office of Great Chamberlain by the Empress Maud, and was also created Earl of Oxford. About this title it is curious to note that de Vere was to have been Earl of Cambridge, unless it was vested in the King of Scotland; failing the Cambridge title he was then to have choice of either Oxford, Berkshire, Wilts, or Dorset, and selected the first named. The grants of the Empress Maud were confirmed by Henry II. He was succeeded in 1194 by his son Aubrey, who is stated to have been a friend of King John, and a "bad man." This earl died childless, and the title passed to his younger brother Robert, who was one of the twenty-five barons appointed to enforce the provisions of Magna Charta. Robert, the third Earl, at one period of his life fought against the infidels, and it was in his time that the de Veres first bore the mullet on their shield.

In the time of the third Earl Hedingham Castle was besieged and taken by John's adherents, but was shortly after surrendered to Prince Lewis the Dauphin. Hugh de Vere, the fourth Earl, died in 1263; Robert, the fifth, known as "the saint," sided with Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, was taken prisoner a few days before the battle of Evesham, and died in 1296. The sixth Earl, Robert, married Margaret, the daughter of Roger Mortimer Earl of March, and died in 1331, being succeeded by his nephew John, a great soldier, who saw service in Scotland, Flanders, and France. He was wrecked on the coast of Connaught, where the inhabitants in a most barbarous manner

pillaged the unfortunate castaways. Present at the battles of Creci and Poitiers, the seventh Earl eventually died of fatigue at the siege of Rheims (1360). Thomas, the eighth Earl, appears to have left no mark in history. Robert, the ninth Earl, was a favourite of Richard II., and was unworthily celebrated for "lewdness and cowardice." Created Marquess of Dublin, by his master, in 1385, he was advanced to the Dukedom of Ireland in the following year. Hated by a large proportion of his countrymen, Earl Robert, in fear of his life, fled to the Continent, accompanied by Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. Returning to England, he headed a body of 5,000 men, and took the field in support of Richard II. The force was surrounded at Radcote Bridge, Oxfordshire, and the Earl had to escape death by swimming. Cited to appear before Parliament, he again fled abroad, where he died in poverty in 1392, it is stated from the effects of a wound received while boar-hunting at Louvaine. His body was brought to England, where the King insisted upon having the coffin opened in order to see his favourite face once more, and then himself with much pomp attended the funeral at Earl's Colne.

Earl Robert was twice married, firstly, to Lady Philippa de Courcy, the granddaughter of Edward II., a union which he repudiated; secondly, to a Portuguese girl named Lancerona, who is reported to have been a domestic servant, but who was at any rate the faithful companion in exile of her unworthy husband. Her tomb is at Earl's Colne, and is remarkable for the curious headdress of piked-horns, a style of headgear intro-

duced into England by Anne of Bohemia, the former mistress of Lancerona. Being childless, Earl Robert was succeeded by his nephew Aubrey, who by consent of Parliament in the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard II. was restored to the earldom, but not, however, to the office of Great Chamberlain. Aubrey, the tenth Earl, died in the year 1400, and was succeeded by his son Richard, then a boy of fourteen. Richard, who was a Knight of the Garter, died in 1417. During his tenure of the title Maud, the widow of Thomas, the eighth, and mother of Robert, the ninth Earl, was foolish enough to set about a report that Richard II. was yet living. She stated that the former monarch was concealed in Scotland, and, having caused badges (silver-gilt harts) to be made and distributed to his supposed friends, ended her life in prison.

The twelfth Earl was John, a boy of nine years old, who, while a ward, married without leave Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Howard, Kt., and was in consequence fined £2,000. Earl John was a staunch Lancastrian, and being taken at Towton, was, with his eldest son Aubrey, attainted. Father and son were beheaded on Tower Hill in 1461. The unlucky twelfth Earl was succeeded by his second son John, who was restored to the family honours, and created a Knight of the Garter during the brief Lancastrian triumph. Being, however, routed at Barnet, where the Vere badge, the "mullet," was mistaken for the Yorkist "rose and sun," and the wearers shot down by Lancastrian archers, the Earl, together with his brothers George and Thomas, was attainted. Their lives were, however, spared. Earl John escaped from prison and succeeded in

reaching the Continent, but was unwise enough to return and lay siege to St. Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, which he took, but which he had speedily to surrender. Thrown into prison, he there remained until almost the last year of the reign of Richard III., when by means of bribery he managed to escape. His unfortunate countess meanwhile had never been allowed to see him, and was, owing to the confiscation of the family estates, in a condition little short of destitution. When Henry of Richmond landed in England, the Earl accompanied him, and was in command of the archers at the battle of Bosworth Field. Restored to all his possessions and honours, he was sworn a Privy Councillor, Constable of the Tower, and appointed Lord High Admiral of England, Ireland, and the Duchy of Aquitaine. He commanded against Lambert Simnel, and also was in the field against Lord Audley. When Henry VIII. came to the throne the office of Great Chamberlain was restored to de Vere, who also held among minor offices those of Constable of Clare in Suffolk, and of the Castle of Colchester. This was the Earl of whom the well-known story is told concerning the fine of 15,000 marks, for a breach of the Statute of Retainers. The scene of the event was Hedingham Castle. It is curious to note that at the funeral of the thirteenth Earl "there were given of black gowns the number of nine hundred and more; and so was my lord brought to the parish church and laid in the quire." The fourteenth holder of the title was John, a nephew, known as "Little John of Campes." He was a man of extremely small stature, but had the reputation of being "wise, good, and rich." On his death, in 1526, a cousin, whose elaborate tomb in the church of Castle Hedingham has already

been described, succeeded to the family honours. The fifteenth Earl was high in favour with Henry VIII., and, as may be naturally supposed, was an ardent opponent both of Wolsey and Queen Katherine. Dying in 1539, he was succeeded by his son John, also a K.G. The seventeenth Earl was Edward, who was one of the judges of Mary Queen of Scots, and held a command against the Armada in 1588. He was a wit, a poet, and a great champion at Elizabethan tournaments. This Earl is credited with the introduction into fashionable and courtly life of the practice of wearing perfumed gloves. The Queen caused her portrait to be painted wearing a pair, which he had presented to her. But the wasteful extravagance of this Earl practically ruined the fortunes of the family, and the reason alleged for this woful waste is a strange one. It seems that Thomas Howard, the Duke of Norfolk, who was executed, was the greatest friend of the Earl, and that the latter petitioned Cecil Lord Burleigh in vain to save the Duke's life. Now Cecil's daughter Anne was the Earl's wife, and Hedingham Castle was her jointure. To revenge the death of his friend, he repudiated his wife and set to work to wreck his estate! He defaced the castle, disparked the parks, pulled down the outbuildings, and cut down the timber. After doing all this mischief his mortification must have been extreme to find it useless, as his wife predeceased him. He married again, and in disgust would have sold Hedingham, had not his second wife by a kindly act contrived to preserve the estate for the family.

Between 1547 and 1580 the following entries occur in the calendar of State Papers. On June 27, 1547, Sir Thomas D'Arcy

writes from Hedingham Castle to Wm. Cecil, that he has inquired into the love affair between the Earl of Oxford and Mrs. Dorothy. He begs to know whether it is Somerset's pleasure that the match should be stayed, and suggests a match between the Earl and one of Lord Wentworth's daughters. It would seem that either the match was "stayed," or that the lovers never came to an understanding, for John, the sixteenth Earl, did not marry "Mrs. Dorothy." On June 15, 1560, the Earl writes to the Council that he has heard at Hedingham Castle the charge against Thomas Holland, parson of Little Burstled, of uttering malicious words against the Queen. It appears that Holland confessed to having heard the Vicar of Storford, Herts, declare that a man was sent to the Tower for reporting that the Queen was with child. On April 19, in the next year, comes the report to the Council of the arrest of divers persons for unlawful practices in religion. The Earl announces that he has searched the house of Sir Thomas Wharton (Newhall), who humbly submits himself to the Queen; and that a search has also been made at Sir Edward Waldegrave's. He encloses letters which were found there, and intercedes for the pardon of Wharton.

The inclosures are :—

1. An inventory of all such implements of superstition as were found in the chamber near Lady Wharton's bed-chamber at Newhall, Essex, April 17th.

2. The confession of Emme Barnes as to the celebration of mass by John Coxe in the house of one Stubbes at Westminster, and also the confession of Ann Pallady as to Coxe's resort to Lady Waldegrave.

3. A letter from Christopher Stubbes to his wife, in which he desires her to send him part of the money given to her by Lady Waldegrave.

In the year 1580, at which time the Essex Bay and Say industry was most flourishing, we find the inhabitants of Hedingham forwarding a petition to beg the Council to order twenty Dutch families who had removed from Halstead to Colchester to return to the former place, there to "resume their trade of bay making."

The eighteenth Earl of Oxford died in 1625 at the siege of Breda. He was succeeded by his cousin Robert, in whose time the celebrated controversy took place with Robert Bertie, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, relative to the hereditary office of Great Chamberlain. Lord Willoughby d'Eresby claimed the office through his mother Mary, who was daughter of John, the sixteenth Earl, and sister and heiress of Edward, the seventeenth. The case was decided against the Earl of Oxford. His death took place at the siege of Maestrich in 1632, where he was in command of a regiment. The twentieth and last Earl succeeded to the title when only six years of age. In 1648 he commanded a regiment of English Infantry in the service of the States-General. As an ardent Royalist he, of course, suffered during the Rebellion and Protectorate; but on the Restoration he was named Privy Councillor, received the Garter, and the Lord Lieutenancy of the county of Essex. He married twice, but had no children by his first wife. By his second he had a son and a daughter, who both died young, and a second daughter, who married Charles Beauclerk, the natural son of Charles II., who was subsequently the Duke of St.

Albans. It is related that the last Earl of Oxford, who had so far departed from his original political creed as to agree to the expulsion of James II., died "at a miserable cottage" on the 12th of March, 1702. With Aubrey, the twentieth and last Earl of this long line, ended the male branch of the historic house of de Vere.

Mention has been made of the destruction of the towers and buildings of the castle by Edward, the seventeenth Earl, but a curious fact remains yet to be told. In 1666, during the Dutch war, in order to prevent Hedingham being troubled with the custody of Dutch prisoners, and, what was esteemed worse, the billeting of soldiers on the inhabitants, the keep was dismantled and brought to its present condition.

This, then, terminates the short sketch of the history of this grand old place, for grand it is, both in appearance and in its memories. Though few of its owners were men of extraordinary genius, yet the record of evil-doing and crime in so lengthy a line is singularly small. It must be remembered that the de Veres were great, powerful, and, as far as can be ascertained, in the main honourable, in times when these qualities were sadly lacking among their compeers. This, maybe, is the reason why, after a lapse of nearly two centuries, the extinct family of the Earls of Oxford is yet remembered with veneration and respect.



CHAPTER V.

FROM WITHAM TO LAYER MARNEY.

THE town of Witham is divided into two portions, known respectively as Newland Street and Cheping Hill; the latter, which is the ancient part of the town, lies upon the north, the former, and more modern quarter, on the south side of the railway. In Newland Street a few old houses remain. For the most part they are shorn of whatever external decorations they may formerly have possessed, but there is a curious old painted copper sign at the chief inn, the "White Hart," a sign in which the background has been cut out, so that the subject is seen in relief. Beyond the railway matters are very different, and it is not easy to conceive that two such apparently dissimilar places can really belong to one and the same town. Newland Street appears like a comparatively modern town, while Cheping Hill has all the look of an extremely ancient country village—the sort of place to be found where railways are unknown. Curiously enough, the first object which cannot fail to attract notice is an imported sign in the shape of a large and well-carved figure of an "Indian boy" standing just outside the "Railway Hotel."

This figure was brought to Witham by the former owner of a coffee-house in Shoreditch, who migrated thither some years since. The village, for village it certainly is, lies about a triangular green on the side of a hill, at the apex of which stands the church. Round the green are clustered groups of quaint, ancient cottages and small houses. There is also one short side-street running up past the eastern end of the graveyard. The scene is very



picturesque. At the foot of the hill, where the road branches, stands the village inn with its bargeboarded gables, projecting upper story, and old-fashioned sign. Opposite to it the village forge, beyond this, a series of irregularly-shaped tile roofs and weatherbeaten gables, broken here and there by a cluster of brick chimneys, and backed by the grey church tower. On the left is the green, on the further side of which are other ancient cottages nestling beneath some fine old trees. On the third side of the

open space are to be found perhaps the oldest houses in the place—quite a typical row of rural Essex habitations. Two curious recesses in the plaster of one of them are rather a puzzle; they can hardly have been intended for ornaments, and they do not appear to have ever been used as windows. Upon the hill beyond the church, near the Braintree road, are to be found traces of an encampment. In the chapter dealing with Maldon the building of Witham was mentioned, and Cheping Hill is in all probability the portion of the place which was built and fortified, or re-built and re-fortified, by Edward the Elder, in the year 913. The church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, contains one good tomb, that of Southcote, a judge who lived at Witham Place, and died in 1585. There are also, on a shelf in the vestry, some helmets belonging to tombs in the church, which one would like to see replaced in their original positions. On the right-hand side of the road leading to Faulkbourne, and just outside the village of Cheping Hill, stands an old brick building with crow-stepped gables, now used as a barn. Near this, in a field, there was formerly a fine old mansion, of which now not a trace remains. This brick building has still something of an ecclesiastical air about it, despite its conversion, and one is inclined to hazard a guess that it was once the chapel. To locate a place in these days is not easy, but I venture to suggest that this was part of the house belonging to an estate known as “Bacon’s and Abbot’s”—an estate given by Roger Bacon to the Abbot and convent of St. John at Colchester. The tenant of the farmhouse attached to the old brick building

pointed out a fieldpath by which Faulkbourne Hall might be more readily reached. The distance was short and soon covered, and, having some knowledge of the extreme beauty of this fine old mansion, I had great hopes of an architectural treat. The disappointment was therefore all the more keenly felt when, for the first and only time in the county of Essex, an application for permission to look around was met by a refusal. Leave even to view the grand old garden front was denied. Approaching the house the main front had, of course, been visible, and it might have been sketched had one chosen, but having laid it down, as a rule, always to ask permission before using the pencil, on receiving a reply in the negative there was nothing for it but to turn away. A portion of Faulkbourne Hall was built as long ago as the reign of Stephen; tradition ascribes it to the Earl of Gloucester. The place has been added to many times in succeeding ages, but the main part is Tudor, and Tudor of a very ornate and beautiful kind.

Reference has been made in a previous chapter to a Sir Walter Mildmay to whom was granted the Manor of Bradwell in 1604. Sir Walter was the son of Sir Thomas Mildmay, whose non-appointment in 1584 to the command of the "trained men of the Witham half-hundred" originated a pretty little local dispute. Mildmay, it would appear, was in favour at Court, but was not locally popular. A letter exists from Walsingham to the Commissioners for Musters in Essex in which a reproof is administered to them for placing these "trained men" under the command of some other local magnate, and alleging that most of

the men were Mildmay's tenants and near neighbours. To this reproof Lord D'Arcy sends a reply to the effect that the Commissioners had received the letter of Walsingham with all due respect, and at the same time requests that "the arrangement for that division may be confirmed as appointed by the Commissioners, and not be transferred to Sir Thomas Mildmay."

It is not definitely stated how the dispute ended, but from one or two subsequent entries it would seem as if Walsingham had not enforced the appointment of the Court nominee. The military riot at Maldon on St. Patrick's Day, 1628, which led to the removal of Captain Carew's company of Irish soldiers, seems to have been followed up at Witham by a second riot on March 26th. That both were serious affairs is evident from the allusions in several documents—one, curiously enough, dated from "Witham Friary," in the county of Somerset, gives a very alarming view of the state of public feeling on the question of billeting in the West—the "Parliament men" holding it to be so dangerous to "billet any, as that they refuse to join in doing anything therein," while the captains of the companies were in almost hourly expectation of having their men turned out of doors by the billeters. On December 17, 1633, comes an amusing report from two Witham Magistrates, Sir Benjamin Ayloff and Sir Thomas Wiseman, to Edward, Lord Barrett, of Newburgh, concerning a supposed traitor. It seems that one Francis Barrett, a sailor, "a poor straggling fellow," was accused of treason by John Brewer and his wife, innkeepers of Witham. The grounds of the accusation were as follows:—While drinking with his host, the sailor was asked if he

came from London ; in answer he admitted so much. Next, an inquiry was put to him whether he had heard of a Jesuit lately executed there for treason. His reply was, "Yes," but, unfortunately for him, he added, "and there is three more of the company, but it skills not where they be, I know not." The accusers had no more evidence to offer, but ridiculous as it may seem to us, the wretched sailor was committed to Colchester gaol pending a reference to headquarters.

Edward Barrett above referred to was the first and only Lord Newburgh of the original peerage. He was an Essex man, whose family had been settled at Bellhus for two centuries. First knighted, he subsequently became Chancellor of the Exchequer to Charles I., by whom he was created a peer of Scotland by patent, October 17, 1627. Lord Barrett died without issue in 1644, and the title then became extinct.

In November, 1638, the postmaster of Colchester, one Edward Bridge, and a poor Ipswich carrier, by name William Gore, found themselves committed to Newgate by Secretary Windebank, and petition to be released. Their petition, which contains a story of a stray packet of letters, is most curious reading. Windebank had, it seems, sent a packet of letters to Yarmouth, and these were brought to the house of Bridge by the Witham postman. Bridge was not at home, though his wife was. She, however, could not read, and in her perplexity consulted a neighbour, who was seemingly equally illiterate, for by some means Yarmouth was construed into Harwich. The packet duly reached Harwich, and was at once despatched back to Colchester by the Mayor of that

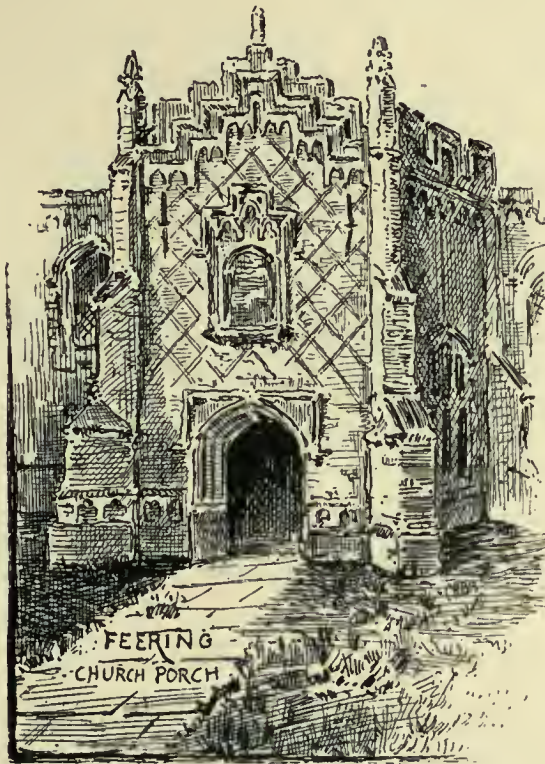
place. By this time the horse was tired, and no other animal could be obtained, all in the locality being requisitioned for the use of the Court. Bridge, however, determined to send the packet on to Ipswich by the carrier, and did so, requesting that it might be delivered to the postmaster. The Ipswich postmaster would not receive it from an ordinary messenger, and back it came again to Bridge. Meanwhile Secretary Windebank, having become uneasy, instituted an inquiry into the fate of his packet of letters—an



inquiry which resulted in the incarceration of the petitioners. The whole of the postal arrangements seem to have been of the most primitive character, the complaints to headquarters are numerous, and the rebukes administered to the country postmasters are many and various. On one occasion we find the postmasters of Witham and Colchester both in trouble because a mounted post-boy had ridden off in the opposite direction to Chelmsford with his bag, considering it too much trouble to ride on to his destination.

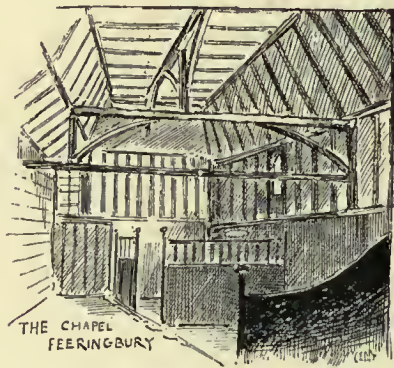
The road between Witham and Kelvedon (anciently known as

Easterford) passes through some five miles of uninteresting country. Nor is there anything to notice in the long straggling village street of Kelvedon—a street which descends gradually for nearly a mile, till crossing the river Blackwater (or Pant) one enters the parish



of Feering. A few yards beyond this bridge stands a fine old inn known as the "Sun." This wayside hostelry has some very good carving on the outside, especially on the gables. One of its rooms once contained some very beautiful carving, but unfortunately the owner was persuaded to sell the panels some years ago. Imme-

diately opposite the "Sun," on the other side of a piece of marshy waste ground, stand the remains of the disused old bridge, composed of many small stone arches, now in the last stage of decay. Here the road rises again till the village of Feering is reached. Feering is a pretty little place with a fine old church, remarkable for its very ornate rubbed-brick south porch. Not very far from Feering, in the direction of Coggeshall, stands an old manor-house, still partly moated, by name Feeringbury. Feeringbury was one of the possessions of the Abbey of



Westminster as far back as the year 1343, and remained so until the dissolution, when, together with Feering, it was granted to the new bishopric of Westminster. On the suppression of this diocese by Edward VI. in 1550, the place passed to the Bishops of London, and later the old manor-house was

the residence for a considerable period of Bishop Bonner. The chapel still remains, though now used as a stable, and hardly to be recognized as an ecclesiastical building. Unlike the house itself, it is half timbered, and has its narrow windows cut out through the solid beams. Once a fine avenue stood facing the house, but time or the woodman's axe has caused the greater part of the ancient elm-trees to disappear. Some few, however, are left, and one of these has a singularly twisted and gnarled butt. At Feering during the first half of the seventeenth

century lived Dr. Robert Aylett, who, being the "Ordinary," is constantly heard of in ecclesiastical matters. His letters to Laud, then Bishop of London, to Sir John Lambe, the Dean of Arches, and others, are many and interesting. In one to Laud, dated September 3, 1632, Aylett writes: "The people of Colchester are like them of Ephesus. Their Diana is their liberty, and none but their town clerk can appease their tumult." The letter which concerns the rebuilding of St. Paul's, then in a most ruinous condition, contains this rather ominous sentence: "There is a cloud arising which threatens a foul storm." The clergy in this district at that time do not appear to have lived the most blameless of lives—accusations of impropriety of conduct are by no means infrequent, and in most cases the charges seem to have been amply substantiated. The Vicar of Witham was allowed to purge himself, *sexta manu*, in 1635, and among his six compurgators are to be found Israel Edwards, subsequently the minister in Mersea, and John Woolhouse, or Woolace, of the same place, the man whose benefice was afterwards sequestrated on account of his scandalous conduct. Wright took oath on the Gospels that he was guiltless of the charge laid against him, the six compurgators followed suit, and swore that they believed him. Thereupon Wright was pronounced to be purged—but he had to pay all the costs.

In 1636 Dr. Aylett reports to the Dean of Arches that a Scotch Minister at Leigh had kept a fast in his parish church all day during Wednesday in Ascension week, praying and preaching. The people in the Essex Archdeaconry seem to have objected very strongly to altar rails, and Dr. Aylett had much

difficulty in carrying out the orders of the Vicar-General (Sir Nathaniel Brent) on this point. It seems to have been the custom to move the altar table into the body of the church for the purpose of Celebration. The Essex men averred that they only did what was done in the London churches, and refused to erect altar rails, producing in support of this practice an "article" from one of the books of "Metropolitan Visitation" which, they pretended, gave due authority for such action. In reporting the state of the case to the Dean of Arches, poor Dr. Aylett plaintively avers that all "his good work is undone."

Sir John Lambe, besides holding the office of Dean of Arches, was also Chancellor and Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Henrietta Maria. A pathetic letter is addressed to him in 1639 from Feering by his daughter Barbara, who was then paying a visit there. It would seem that gossips had been busy with the young lady's name and that she was very unhappy. She writes begging her father to let her return home "for many reasons," and states that she is "so troubled that she will not be well till she is with him." Mistress Barbara confesses to certain love passages between herself and the Lords Wentworth and Fielding, but vows that "she will not marry the last." The letter concludes, "I beseech you not to be distrustful of me, for then I shall be afraid ever to marry for fear my husband learn of you to be jealous of me."

At Feering the road branches off to the right, and the character of the country changes, becoming much more picturesque. Flower-seed farms, brilliant in summer with a wealth of colour,

diversify the landscape on either hand. The effect produced by a field of several acres, laid out as if it were one huge "ribbon border," is not easily described. Row after row of sweet-peas, each different in hue, from pure white to the deepest purple, stretches away from hedge to hedge, filling the air with perfume and the ear with the hum of bees. Gay butterflies flit hither and thither, now settling for an instant by the roadside, anon winging their wanton flight over the gorgeous carpet extended beneath. To the sweet-peas succeed nasturtiums, one blazing mass of colour—here the palest primrose, there a deep brick-red, and, again beyond them, a long wide strip of the strongest orange hue. The next field, perhaps, is planted with larkspurs, both dwarf and tall, more delicate in tint than the nasturtiums and more diversified, their spiky heads of white, pale pink, pale mauve, rose, maroon, deep blue and violet, pointing upwards in regular lines, some wide, some narrow. Here and there in a field, separated from all others of its kind, grows a patch of some special strain, so placed to ensure its purity as far as possible—looking all the more brilliant in contrast to the surrounding green. Nor is the road by any means flat—true, the hills are not high, but they are in places fairly steep—and gradually the level rises till Tiptree Heath is reached, that paradise of agricultural experiment and wire fencing. But a visit to Tiptree Heath is not here under contemplation. As we wander on between hedge-crowned banks, oak coppices thick with an undergrowth of sturdy hazel, the church tower of the little village of Messing soon comes in sight. The name Messing is interpreted to mean "Cow's meadow,"

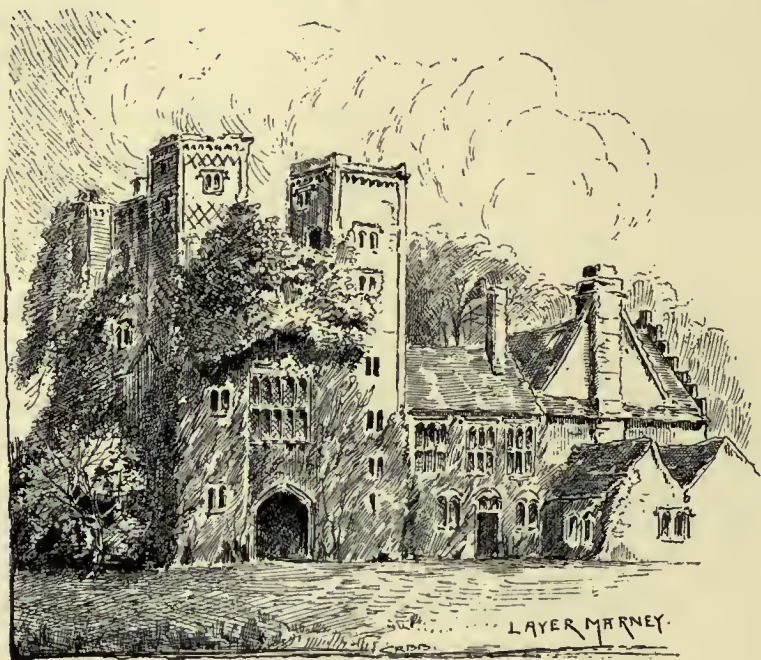
while Feering claims to stand for "Bull's meadow"—a curious pair of titles for two adjoining parishes. Messing is quite a tiny little village—in fact, a mere ring of cottages surrounding an irregular open space. The church shows a few relics of antiquity in the shape of oak carvings, and there is also a huge iron-bound, many-locked parish chest. But the place would not be worth a visit were it not for its east window. This is filled with beautiful old Flemish glass, and is certainly as fine a specimen as is to be found in the county. There is a tradition, of very doubtful authenticity in this case, that at the time of the Great Rebellion the parson, to save the window from destruction, caused it to be taken out, packed in a huge chest and buried in a field. Many years passed, it is said, before it was dug up and the window replaced in its original position. Formerly in Messing Church there was a fine old cross-legged wooden effigy, usually considered to be that of the founder, Sir William de Messing. A few of these effigies still remain in the county, but the fate of the one at Messing was most untoward—by the order of the then vicar it was hacked to pieces and burnt as firewood!

From Messing the church and tower of Layer Marney may be reached by two routes. One of these is the high road, which passes the rectory, where the church key is kept, and approaches Layer Marney Tower from the rear; the other a field-path leading down into a valley and up to the hill on which, amid the trees, stand the noble brick towers of the gate-house and the hardly less conspicuous tower of the parish church. There are in Essex three parishes of Layer, known respectively as Layer

Marney, Layer Breton, and Layer-de-la-Haye. They stand in a clump like the three parishes of Tolleshunt, a few miles distant, of which mention has previously been made. It is, however, the first of these only that merits notice. The spelling of the names Layer and Marney has undergone many changes, the first appearing variously as Leyre, Layre, and Legra, while during the centuries that the manor was held by the Marney family the following forms are all to be met with in various dated documents, de Marenis, de Marini, de Marinis, and Marny.

The first mention of the Marneys is in 1160, when Hugo de Marini, the Prebend of Tottenhall, in the church of St. Paul, London, became dean, dying twenty-one years later. At this time the Marneys were settled in Essex, and the manor remained in the family until the reign of Henry VIII., when the co-heiresses of John, the second and last Lord Marney, sold the tower and estates to the Secretary of Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Brian Tuke. The family possessions in this part of Essex were increased in 1262, when William de Marini purchased lands here from Robert le Carpenter and Mary his wife. Otherwise, beyond a bare record of names, marriages, statements that certain de Marenis held office as High Sheriffs, &c., the family has no history until the days of Sir Henry Marney, Kt. This "Essex worthy" is stated to have been "a person of great wisdom, gravity, and singular fidelity to that prudent prince Henry VII.," of whose Privy Council he was a member in the first year of the reign. A warrior; he commanded the force employed against the Earl of Lincoln at the battle of Stoke, and was also in the field against Lord

Audley and the Cornish rebels. On the accession of Henry VIII. Sir Henry was re-appointed Privy Councillor and received the Garter. He was Captain of the Guard to the King, and seems to have been rewarded by a large slice of the estates of Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, when that unfortunate nobleman



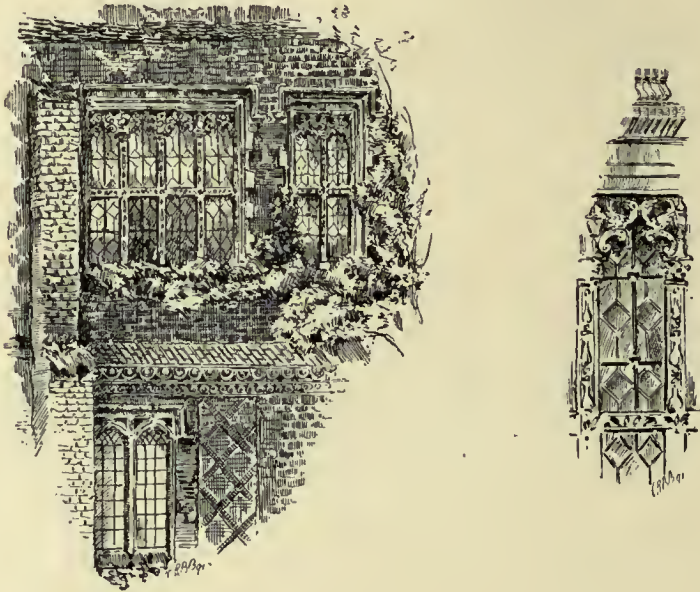
was attainted. In February, 1522, Marney became Keeper of the Privy Seal, and by letters patent, dated April 9, 1523, was raised to the peerage with the title of Baron Marney of Layer Marney, Essex. Lord Marney died May 24, 1523, and was succeeded by his son John, the second Baron, at that time one of the "esquires of the body" of Henry VIII., and Governor of Rochester Castle.



The second Lord Marney died April 27, 1525, leaving two daughters co-heiresses, and the title thus became extinct in a few days over two years from the time of its creation.

Layer Marney Tower, in reality only the gate-house which gave admission to the hall courtyard, is one of the grandest buildings of its kind in the kingdom. It consists of a central portion of two stories with projecting towers at each corner, those in the front being octagonal, while those in the rear are square. The front towers, which reach to a height of about eighty feet each, contain eight floors. On the western side of the gate-house a wing extends, which is now used as a private residence. On the eastern side stands a range of outbuildings, for the most part ancient, and possessing not a few peculiar characteristics. The walls of the towers, house, and outbuildings are built of red brick, patterned here and there with crossing lines of black. Throughout the whole there is much ornamental brickwork, the two bands of trefoils which compass the octagonal towers being specially noticeable. But grand though the building is as a specimen of early sixteenth-century brickwork, it possesses another remarkable decoration which is peculiarly its own, for the window mullions, and the ornaments which take the place of crenellations, are composed of stamped earth of a singularly ornate design. The large windows above the gate are most lavish in elaborate detail, which is not merely confined to the ornamental and decorated work above the Ionic capitals forming the mullions, but even appears on the shafts within as well as without. The smaller sketches will give some idea

of the rich appearance of this almost unique architectural relic. The ornaments on the summit of the turrets consist of semicircular slabs stamped with a radiating pattern, flanked by dolphins and surmounted by an ornament, the cornice immediately beneath being a double one, "egg-and-tongue" pattern, over a continuous scroll.



As may be imagined, the turret rooms are not lofty, but the two main apartments are very fine. The present inhabited portion lies, as has been said, on the western side of the gate-house, and here again the stamped earthwork is very noticeable in the first-floor windows. Those on the ground floor are not ornate, and they have stone mullions. Thanks to the courtesy

of the present occupier of Layer Marney Tower, I was enabled to carefully examine both the gate-house and the west wing. Within the latter is a small but beautiful landing or gallery, whose windows, all richly decorated, overlook the garden in the rear. One room also possesses a good ceiling. A climb to the summit of the tower enables one to study the details of the "dolphin designs" and the cornice, and here there yet remains a very fine pair of twisted brick chimneys. The view is worth going a long distance to see, for it extends over the level green country, Salcot Marsh, Mersea, across the estuary of the Blackwater—from this distance a silver streak—and out to the German Ocean. Here and there a few roofs dot the landscape, and a church tower or two stands up amid the trees. On the horizon, perhaps, the sails of vessels are visible, and the smoke of a passing steamer. The view may not be grand, but it is wide, pleasant, and essentially English.

There appears to be some doubt whether the whole design of Layer Marney Hall was ever carried into execution; and I am inclined to believe that the courtyard was never enclosed by buildings. All search into topographical works fails to reveal any account of the demolition of the quadrangle; and it is reasonable to assume that it was never built. From the front it is not possible to get a comprehensive view of the range of buildings, but in the rear a very good idea can be obtained of the present condition of the place; and from beneath one of the fine old trees which fringe the present tennis lawn I took a sketch.

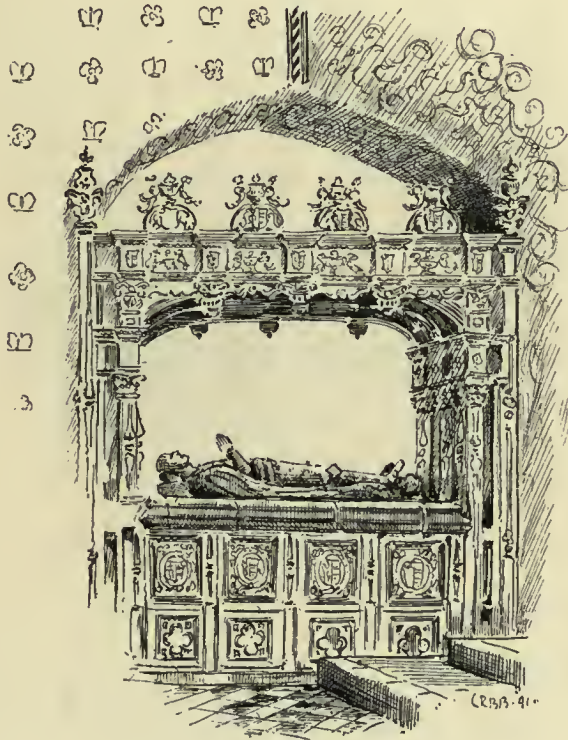
The Church of the Virgin Mary, Layer Marney, stands only

a few yards distant from the door of the hall. It is brick-built, and not externally handsome, but within there are several things both rare and curious. Immediately upon entering a large fresco representing the legend of St. Christopher meets the eye. This fresco, as is common with such decorations, was for years concealed beneath successive coats of whitewash. When discovered it no



doubt had suffered greatly, but the propriety of the method employed in restoration is decidedly open to question. There are three beautiful Marney tombs. One, a white alabaster tomb with an effigy in armour of Sir William Marney, originally stood before the high altar, and round were the six carved oak pillars now affixed to some of the seats. Between these pillars (which are topped by Marney "lions" holding shields) hung chains, and

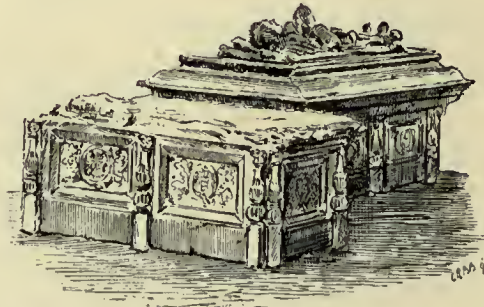
relics of the ironwork are yet visible. This tomb was removed from its original position a few years ago to the Marney chapel, north of the chancel. Sir William Marney, who died in 1414, was the grandfather of the first Lord Marney. The tomb of Henry



TOMB OF HENRY LORD MARNEY.

Lord Marney and of his two wives stands between the chapel and the chancel. It is a most remarkable monument: the ornate canopy and the lower portion are executed in stamped earth similar to that employed in the tower. The recumbent effigy is sculptured

in black marble, and is even yet in the most perfect condition. The details of the costume are most interesting, the entire work is excellent, and so much character is expressed in the face that one cannot help believing it to be a good likeness. By his will Lord Marney gave specific directions as to his tomb and that of his two wives, Thomasine and Elizabeth. He ordered how it was to be made and where it was to be placed, left money for masses to be said by two priests for the souls of himself, his two wives and his ancestors, also providing funds for the



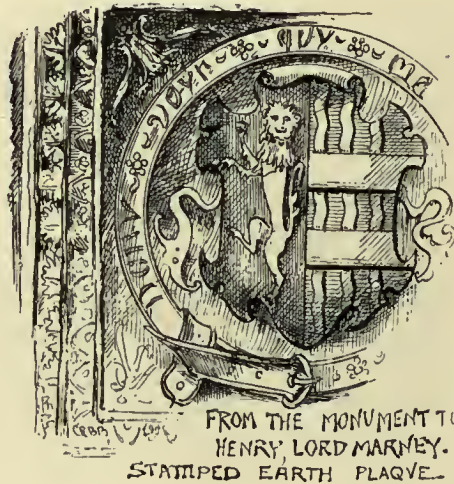
TOMB OF JOHN, THE SECOND LORD MARNEY.

completion of the Marney chapel, which was to have "a substantial roof of lead and glazed windows." That lead ultimately was melted into bullets by Cromwell's Ironsides. The Marney chapel extends for nearly the whole length of the north side of the church, and is walled off from it, the fresco of St. Christopher being painted on this wall within the nave. In the centre of the chapel lies John, the second Lord Marney, beneath an equally remarkable tomb. The top slab, likewise of black marble, bears an effigy nearly equal in artistic merit to that which adorns the tomb of

his father, and one which is in quite as good a state of preservation. The sides of the tomb and the altar at the west end of it are similarly made of stamped earth. This altar at the west end of the tomb is very remarkable; and it is much to be regretted that its slab has disappeared. By his will the second Lord Marney ordered the monument to be erected in the spot where it is, and "of such stone as his father's, or else of grey marble," with an "image of brass" for himself, and on either side of his image one for each of his two wives, Christian and Bridget,—also that at the west end there should be an altar for a priest to "sing for him perpetually." The Marney chapel has a fine roof, but its present condition is deplorable; and the beautiful tomb in this desolate and grimily dusty place is a melancholy sight. On the floor stands open a large old parish chest—containing letters and papers of years gone by—possibly of no value, but certainly affording a happy hunting-ground to mice, if one can judge by the fragments. Obviously funds are needed to effect some improvement in the condition of the Marney chapel, and I hope that something will be done to remedy the present state of affairs as soon as may be. The contrast between this damp and dismal place and the remainder of the church is most striking.

In the year 1330 a college for a warden and two chaplains for two chantries was founded in Layer Marney, but it has not been possible to obtain any further information on the subject save that, if founded by one of the Marneys, it must have been by Robert de Marney, who married into the Gernon family. The first

Lord Marney by his will seems to have founded an almshouse close by the church, which was to house five poor people. However, when the property was sold it must be concluded that the bequest was diverted into other channels, as it remains on record that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth the house was pulled down and the material sold.





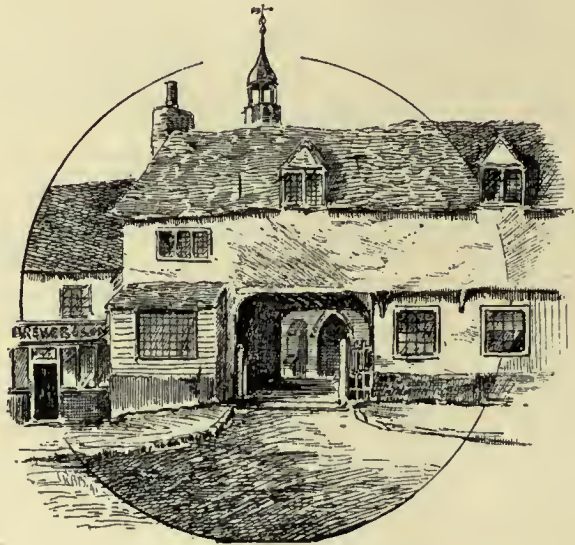
FITZWALTER.

CHAPTER VI.

FELSTEAD, GREAT AND LITTLE DUNMOW, AND THAXTED.

THE village of Felstead stands on the top of a hill some six and a half miles west from the busy little town of Braintree, and about two miles from Little Dunmow. In the present day the place is chiefly known from the large endowed school there—a school which was founded in 1554 by Richard, Lord Riche, though the school buildings of to-day are themselves quite modern. But in some specimens of ancient domestic architecture in the village street, and in the fine old church of the Holy Cross, Felstead has quite enough to show to repay one for visiting the place. The south side of the churchyard is almost completely shut off from the road by the original school-house, now disused, through the gateway of which a path leads to the south porch of the church, distant only a few yards. This ancient school-house is a rambling old building, with the line of its roof broken here and there by dormer windows, and with the lantern of the church tower showing up against the sky in its rear. The church itself is very interesting, and presents good examples of several styles of architecture: for instance, the tower, bold and plain, is Norman, while transitional Norman appears in the nave, and there is a good Early English

door and chancel arch. The piers and capitals of the nave are massive, especially on the south side, where the carving is of a more ornate character, and where as at Castle Hedingham Church, the columns are alternately octagonal and circular. On the south side is the Riche chapel, which contains a number of family monuments, one being that of Richard, Lord Riche, the founder of



FELSTEAD SCHOOL-HOUSE.

the school, who was Lord High Chancellor to Edward VI. Lord Riche died in 1568. The two incised plaques, one of which represents his lordship on horseback, and the other on his deathbed, are the most interesting portions of this stupendous monument. There are in the church two early brasses, one that of Christina Bray, and the other of an unknown knight in armour. One other tomb in the church needs mention ; it is that of

Robert, the son of Oliver Cromwell and Elizabeth his wife, who died in 1639. The end of the inscription on this tomb runs as follows :—

“Robertus fuit eximie pius juvenis, deum timens supra multos.”

Robert Cromwell and two of his brothers were educated at Felstead school, possibly owing to the fact that their mother was



the daughter of Sir James Bouchier, Kt., a London merchant, who possessed an estate there, upon which he usually resided. The school was presumably conducted upon puritanical lines at this period, as in a list of “such ministers in Essex as are not conformable in opinion” the name occurs of a Mr. Seton, “now or late usher to the school in Felstead, in the deanery of Dunmow,” a name annotated by Laud in the following brief way : “a bold boy

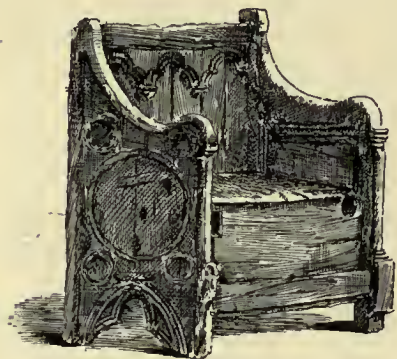
and unlicensed." At a corner of the street, opposite to the old school, stands an old house bearing the builder's name and a date carved upon a beam in the front. This beam is continued round part of the side of the house, and is ornamented with monsters mingled with conventional foliage. The gable-end also shows some good carving, and the brackets which support the overhanging upper story are boldly carved, though they are by no means of an uncommon design. Another similarly decorated house is said to exist in the parish, but the carving, having been covered by a casing of boards, cannot now be seen.

Of all the villages in the county of Essex, Little Dunmow is probably the best known—at least by name, and solely on account of the curious tenure associated with the now almost vanished priory. It is to be remarked that the tenure was not peculiar to one place. At Whichnor, in Staffordshire, a manor was similarly held. In Vienna at one time the existence of a custom of a kindred nature is recorded, and there are likewise traces of an award of a "Flitch of Bacon" at an abbey in Brittany, as a prize for conjugal felicity. With regard to Dunmow the origin of the custom is lost, but the date of establishment, the founder's name, and the rules by which the award was to be made at Whichnor are fully ascertained. One theory which has been advanced, a most improbable theory, is that the monks of Dunmow being celibate, deemed it, or chose to deem it, impossible for a married couple to dwell in peace for a year and a day, backing their opinion by the offer of a flitch of bacon to all candidates who were able on oath to substantiate their claim to the prize.

But it is far more probable that the custom is the outcome of one of those extraordinary and eccentric manorial tenures so frequent in the days gone by. The date popularly assigned to the institution of the "Dunmow Flich" is during the first quarter of the thirteenth century, and the name of the founder is by tradition Robert Fitzwalter.

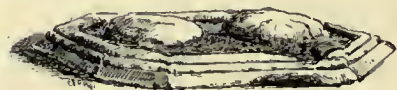
To the Lady Juga, the sister of Ralph Baignard, or Baynard, of Messing, is ascribed the foundation, in 1104, of the Augustinian priory of Little Dunmow. The church, which was consecrated by Maurice, Bishop of London, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, has entirely vanished, with the exception of a portion now used for the parochial services,—a part of a south aisle or chapel of the choir. If the rest of the priory church was as ornate as the fragment still existing the building must have been one of great magnificence. The piers and arches on the north wall are handsome, while on the south side, between and below the large windows, carved tracery and arcading of a most remarkably elaborate character remains. Flowers and foliage, figures of animals, wild, domestic, and mythological, as well as representations of the human form, succeed one another in the profusely decorated spandrels of this arcade. Three tombs in the church are interesting. According to common tradition they are those of the Lady Juga, of Walter Fitzwalter, and of his wife Matilda. The Juga monument consists of a white marble recumbent effigy reposing on a dark grey marble chest. The figure ascribed to Walter Fitzwalter has suffered much injury, the legs being broken off. Behind the altar is the finely-carved old stone reredos,

which is almost as elaborately decorated as the arcade, and enriched with human heads, figures and sculptured angels. Within the altar rails stands the famous "Bacon Chair," and in the vestry is to be seen a hewn stone popularly sup-



THE "BACON CHAIR."

posed to be the "Bacon Stone" upon which claimants knelt while the oath was being administered. The "Bacon Chair" is of undoubted antiquity, and was in all probability originally the Prior's seat in the priory refectory. It is of rude construction, and of considerable weight. Apparently it was carried on two poles, one round and one square, as the holes through which they went are of those shapes. Very properly this old relic is not permitted to be removed from the church. With regard to the "Bacon Stone," there are doubts whether it is genuine. In pictures and



THE "BACON STONE."

prints the candidates are represented kneeling each with one knee upon separate stones of a pyramidal shape. The "Bacon Stone," however, has two projections, now nearly worn away, but the projections were circular in section and probably when complete took the form of cones.

The founder of the noble family of Fitzwalter, to whom the above-mentioned tombs belong, was Robert, usually described as

the younger son of Richard Fitzgilbert, the founder of the house of Clare. He was the steward of Henry I., and to him was granted the lordship of Dunmow, and that of the honour of Baynard's Castle in London. The second Fitzwalter was named Walter. He married Matilda, the daughter of Richard de Lucy, the "*justiciar*" of Henry II., and died in the year 1198, being buried at Dunmow. The third Fitzwalter was his son, the great Robert, the baronial leader and champion of English liberty. His wife was Gunnor, the daughter and heiress of Robert de Valognes. It would be beyond the purpose here either to narrate at length the exploits, warlike and administrative, of the popular hero, or to mention their results, which were so important. Considerations of this kind belong to history. Suffice it to say that after passing much of his most eventful and useful life in constant endeavours to benefit his countrymen, after many a hard fight in the cause of liberty, after vicissitudes in his career beyond those which ordinarily fall to the lot of men, Robert Fitzwalter emerged triumphant. The patriotic questions decided, Fitzwalter for a brief period engaged in one of the Crusades, but without adding to his reputation thereby. He returned to England before the year 1221, and, passing the rest of his life in peace at home, died on December 9, 1235. Fitzwalter was buried before the high altar in the priory church of Little Dunmow.

Legend and romance are almost invariably associated with the lives of popular heroes, and in the case of Robert Fitzwalter it is not to be wondered that the mythical element is somewhat considerable. The manuscript chronicle of Dunmow

in the Cotton MSS. is responsible for the story of the woes of the virtuous but unhappy Matilda, whose death by poison at the instance of King John has formed the subject of many a ballad and of not a few plays. How the identity of Matilda Fitzwalter, the daughter of the patriot baron, came to be intermingled with that of "Maid Marian," the legendary mistress of the outlaw Robin Hood, will for ever remain a mystery. Yet down to the days of Elizabeth—nay, even as late as during the reign of Charles I.—the romantic story of the monkish chronicle formed the basis of play and poem.

To Robert Fitzwalter, as has previously been said, is ascribed the foundation of the "Dunmow Flitch" usage, and that this quaint ceremony took its origin from some manorial tenure there can be little doubt. Popular opinion in the present day leans to the belief that, though all documentary evidence has long been lost, a charter of some kind once existed which established the right. Certain it is, that though prior to the Dissolution the flitch of bacon was known to have been awarded on three occasions only, yet twice subsequently the then lord of the manor has, by allowing the claim, admitted in some sense its validity. The names and dates regarding these five awards are as follows :—

1. Richard Wright, labourer, of Badbury, in the county of Norfolk, 1445.
2. Stephen Samuel, husbandman, of Little Easton (Ayston-parva), Essex, in 1467, on our Lady Day in Lent.
3. Thomas le Fuller, of Coggeshall, Essex, on Sunday, Sept. 8th, 1510.

In these three cases it may be noted that Wright alone received a flitch ; Samuel and le Fuller being each rewarded by a gammon of bacon.

4. John Reynolds and Ann his wife, of Hatfield Broadoak, Essex, were awarded the prize in 1701, and on the same occasion William and Jane Parsley, of Much Easton, were successful.

5. Thomas Shakeshaft and Ann his wife, of Wethersfield, in Essex, received the flitch in 1751.

This was the last real celebration in Little Dunmow, and of the Shakeshafts it is on record that they made a considerable sum of money at the conclusion of the ceremony by vending slices of their prize at an exorbitant price.

A claim was made in 1772 by a certain John Gilder and his wife, who arrived at Little Dunmow with a crowd of friends and followers, only, however, to find the gates locked by order of the lord of the manor, and no flitch forthcoming. Allusions to the custom of the "Dunmow Flitch" are to be met in the "Vision of Piers Plowman," and in Chaucer. The custom has furnished us with an English proverb, and, lastly, an Essex man, the Rev. Sir Henry Bate-Dudley, took the subject as the foundation of the plot of an opera. Sufficient honour this, without the dubious compliment of a spurious modern attempt at revival.

And what is the village of Little Dunmow like in these days ? It is a straggling little hamlet, with at least one picturesque group of ancient cottages at the turn in the road, beyond which there is a malting-house of recent construction. The fragment of the once grand old priory church, which is hideous now on the

north side, owing to its staring red-brick wall and ugly bell turret, lies a little lower down the hill-side, in the middle of a field. Beyond are the gables of an old farm-house, from its contiguity to the remains of the priory stews, possibly once a portion, and now the only portion remaining, of the priory domestic buildings. Beyond this the valley, a typical Essex landscape. Yet, in this remote little country village, in an unknown grave, lie the bones of one of the greatest Englishmen of antiquity. Is it quite creditable to



VILLAGE OF LITTLE DUNMOW.

the county that there is not even a tablet in the priory church of Little Dunmow to the memory of the greatest Essex man, the grand old English baron, Robert Fitzwalter?

In Great Dunmow all that is interesting is to be found in that portion of the town known as Church-End. The main street, which is nearly a mile in length, does not contain a single house of antique appearance, with the exception of one old-fashioned inn about half-way down. The town-hall was formerly worth seeing, but it has been enlarged and restored. From Witham one ascends to

Cheping Hill, the picturesque quarter ; at Great Dunmow one descends, as the church lies quite in the valley near the river Chelmer, on the very outskirts of the town.

It is a fine old building, with an embattled and corner-turreted tower. The west front is handsome, and above the door are a series of shields bearing the arms of great families once powerful in the county, and probably benefactors to the edifice. The porch on the south



A CONSECRATION CROSS.

side is large and rather peculiar, as the parvise chamber above it, instead of being confined within the limits of the porch, projects out into the aisle somewhat in the manner of a gallery. On one of the buttresses of this porch is a good



specimen of a consecration cross. The interior of the church is by no means uninteresting as a whole, but after the remarkable points in Little Dunmow, and with beautiful Thaxted as the next stopping-place, one finds it rather difficult to enter upon a lengthy

description. A few words, however, are needed upon the subject of the fragments of painted glass in the windows. The shield which represents the Trinity, though well known, and as an emblem to be found both on monumental brasses and incised gravestones, is sufficiently curious to be worth reproduction. The quarry, which bears the name IANE, it would have been interesting to trace. But it is still more noteworthy that the other quarry illustrated, which bears for a device a triple thorn and initials, is to be found in two forms (one being identical with the specimen shown) on windows at Horham Hall, Thaxted.

Near the church of Great Dunmow is a small inn known as "The Angel and Harp," where, in the hall, is some old, though by no means beautiful, plaster decoration. By tradition this was the work of French or Dutch prisoners. At the other end of the irregularly-shaped strip of ground fronting the inn stand two houses, both of most respectable antiquity. One is a plain plaster-fronted gable-ended house of the usual type, the other (known as the "Brick House") a small but handsome Elizabethan dwelling, with ornate brick gables and pinnacles. The old hammered iron gates in front are noteworthy. The windows are mullioned and rather quaint in detail. In fact, as an old-fashioned country dwelling the house is more than ordinarily picturesque, while as a study of colour it is very interesting.

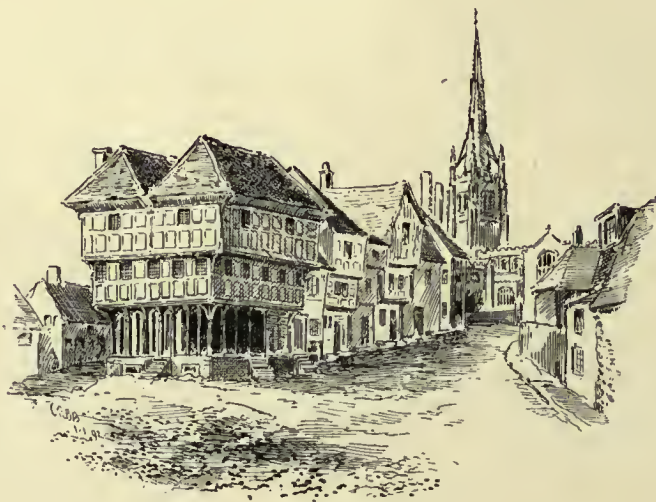
Passing the "Brick House" the road to Thaxted ascends a steep hill, upon the top of which is a level green, fringed with fine timber, and with here and there a tumble-down cottage or two. The wayside views between Great Dunmow and Thaxted are, perhaps,

unequalled in the county. The road winds hither and thither, up hill, down dale, with now and again a glimpse of some little village church amid the trees, or of the gables and chimneys of Little Easton Lodge in the distance surrounded by its woody park. Next past the village of Great Easton, with its "Maynard-badged" houses and barn-like church. This church dates back as far as Norman times, and its flint and Roman-tiled walls have at least antiquity as some compensation for their ugliness. Beyond, again, on the right-hand side, lies the little village of Lindsell, and ahead, on a hill in the distance, standing boldly up against the skyline, is the beautiful church of Thaxted.

Thaxted, once an important borough, is even in its decay a most remarkable place. In its long irregularly-built and straggling street one cannot but feel even by day the incongruity between nineteenth-century costume and the surroundings. One seems to look for doublet and hose, or at least for three-cornered hats and knee-breeches. But by night this feeling is even more perceptible. Wandering along the silent and deserted street, one would hardly be surprised to encounter an old-world, quaintly-garbed watch with cresset or lantern. In the full flood of the moonlight the market-place, with its wonderfully interesting Moot Hall, on each side of which run two narrow streets of houses, many-gabled, overhanging in their upper stories, and curiously leaning, is a sight to be remembered. The road on the left leads through the crowded churchyard to the little old-fashioned group of almshouses, and thence by the fields to the grand old relic, Horham Hall. The road on the right passes the north side of the church, a side which is

adorned by a wonderful porch, and turns off sharply at the top of the hill towards Saffron Walden. Standing in the market-place, and looking up this street, the church appears to block the way, and the vista is closed by the beautiful tower and spire, and the embattled walls with the clere story windows of the nave.

The history of Thaxted is in brief as follows:—In the days of Edward the Confessor the Manor belonged to Eluric, a



THAXTED.

Saxon Thane, who was the founder of the College of Clare, in Suffolk, to which he annexed the church, rectory, and parsonage of Thaxted. In the "Survey" the place is mentioned simply as "Thane land." After the Conquest Thaxted, Clare, and other manors were bestowed upon Richard, the son of Gilbert, Earl of Brion. The successor of Richard annexed the church of Clare to the Abbey of Bec. In 1124 the monks of Clare were removed

to Stoke. Thaxted, in its history, is so involved with Clare that mention of the latter place is absolutely necessary. In the reign of Henry III. an Earl of Clare married, without royal licence, the daughter of his guardian, Hubert de Burgh. This marriage the king succeeded in annulling, and forced the Earl to marry the daughter of John de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. The next Earl of Clare, Gilbert, married a lunatic niece of Henry III., whom he divorced, and for a second wife took a younger daughter of Edward I. The manor of Thaxted was given as a jointure to the divorced wife for her life. Subsequently divided into four parts, Thaxted was for many years alienated from the Clares, but returned to their descendants. Next it passed to Richard, Duke of York, and was, with Clare, the jointure of Cicely, his widow. After her death, in 1495, it descended to her daughter Elizabeth, Queen of Henry VII. In the next reign Thaxted, among other manors, was settled upon Katherine of Arragon. Katherine leased the manor to Sir John Cutt for her life on a payment of £57 7s. On her death the king granted the manor in fee to Sir John upon the same terms.

That Thaxted from its aristocratic connections was an important place, and possessed important rights and privileges at a very early date, is abundantly shown. It did not, however, become a borough until the reign of Edward III., as far as can be ascertained. The first known charter dates from the time of Mary and Philip, though without a doubt a previous document had existed for centuries; and the place is then spoken of as an ancient borough that "hath had in it beyond the memory of

man, a Mayor, &c.," whereas in the reign of Edward III. it is merely designated as a "borough." This charter was confirmed by Elizabeth. James I. amplified the charter, extending the liberties of the town and raising the jurisdiction in pleas of the corporation from £10 to £40. In the first year of James II., on a *quo warranto*, the charter was surrendered by the Corporation.

It appears that the cutlers were established in Thaxted in the reign of Henry III., and that they were then so powerful a body in the place as to obtain special rights and privileges. This manufacturing community had so increased in importance in the days of Edward III., that they formed themselves into a wealthy and flourishing Craft-guild, of which the officers and ordinances were similar to the many thousands of like institutions at that date. It is known that there then existed in Thaxted the following branches of the "cutlery trade": blacksmiths, grinders, carvers, hafters, sheathers, furbishers, gold-beaters, and cutlers. But want of fuel, it is supposed, caused the decay of the industry, and the cutlers began to leave Thaxted. How this exodus affected the size of the town may possibly be conjectured from relics of forges having been found as far distant as a mile. One hamlet yet bears the name of Cutlers' Green. By the time that Edward VI. ascended the throne the cutlery trade of Thaxted was extinct.

It was with the laudable intention of reviving the trade that the charter of Mary and Philip was granted, but the attempt was a failure; as was a similar endeavour in the next reign.

Determined, however, to do something, if possible, towards the prosperity of Thaxted, upon the second failure of the cutlery scheme, Sergeant Benlow, who had been the first Recorder of the town under the charter of Philip and Mary, introduced a body of weavers of cloth and fustian into the place. These weavers struggled on for half a century, and then for some unknown cause left the town. The only relic of this industry is a name "Weaverhead," still applied to one portion of Thaxted.

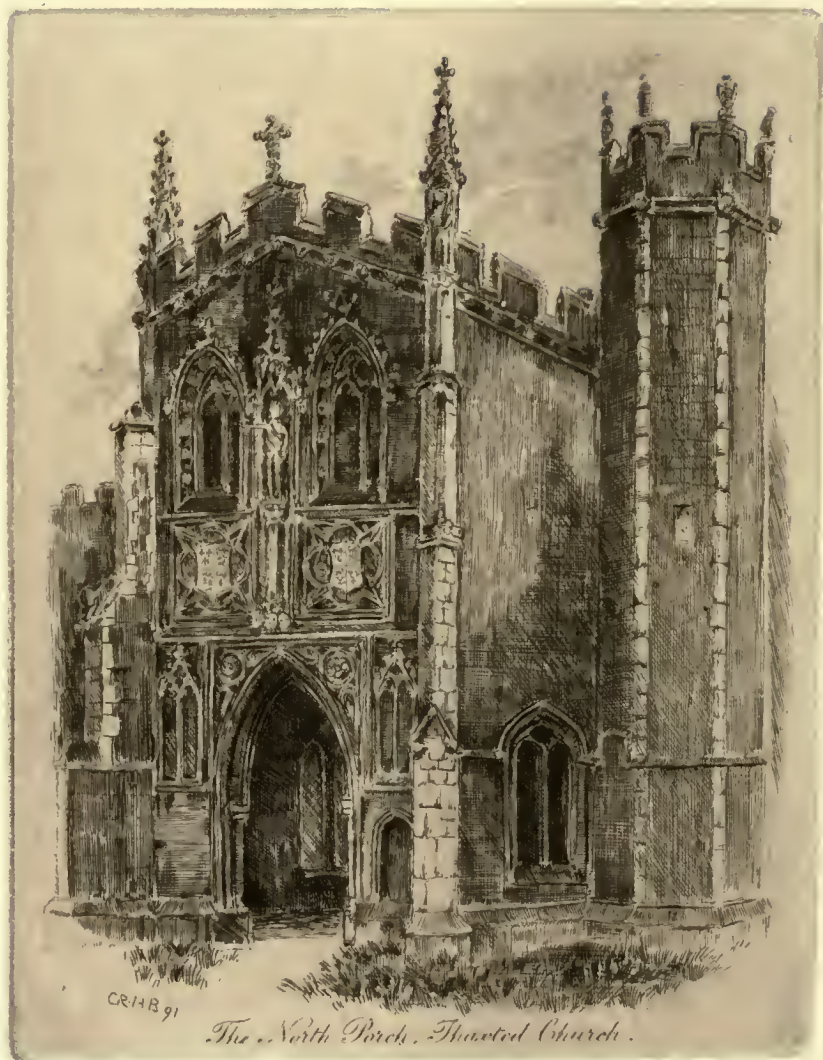
Of the extinct corporation the picturesque old Guild or Moot Hall still remains, facing the market-place, with its two overhanging upper stories and its basement open on three sides. The upper portion is entirely supported by wooden columns, which are arched between in a rather ornate manner. Each arch is pierced by a pair of trefoils, and from each pillar springs an ornamental bracket. At one end of the Moot Hall is a very curious little "lock-up," evidently in its original condition.

The interior of this building does not, unfortunately, equal its exterior in interest, the council chamber and the room above it having been modernized. But along the sides of the open basement hang two very curious relics in the shape of huge iron hooks on very heavy poles, which were formerly used to pull the roofs off burning houses. Unfortunately a few years since several old and interesting houses were burnt, just behind the Moot Hall; at one time it was feared that the Hall itself was doomed, but luckily the flames were stayed. A little way down the street stands an old house, by tradition the dwelling of the Recorder. Some carving beneath the windows is very good.

It consists of the arms of Edward IV., with a lion and a bull as supporters beneath one window, and beneath the other one of the badges of the same king, a black dragon. Carving of this kind from solid blocks of oak is rare; two similar examples are to be met with, one at Sudbury, Suffolk, and the other at Stamford, in Lincolnshire. Hitherto this badge at Thaxted has not been identified, as far as I have been able to ascertain. Two other kings had somewhat similar badges, viz., Edward III. a griffin, and Henry VII. a "red" dragon, and the Earls of Pembroke used a dragon *vert*. It is, however, obviously most probable that the dragon (*passant sable*) beneath the window of the Recorder's house at Thaxted represents the badge of Edward IV. Of houses of a later date there stands near the church, on the opposite side of the road, a rather fine specimen of the architecture of the reign of Queen Anne.

The beautiful church of Thaxted requires particular notice, and at the outset a difficulty presents itself, as the date of its erection and the names of the builders can never be determined. By inference certain portions can be assigned to certain dates, and a study of the decorations will supply some indication as to the benefactors through whose assistance the edifice was reared. From foundations which were discovered a few years since it seems evident that the present church is only in part built upon the old site. The original church was dedicated to St. Catherine, and a chapel to the same saint exists in the building of to-day, but the absolute dedication of the church itself is doubtful: one opinion inclines to the belief that St. Lawrence is





CRAB 91

The North Porch, Thaxted Church.

the patron saint, another holds that that honour is the due of St. John the Baptist, whilst a third ascribes it to the Virgin Mary. It may be worth while to add that there are traces of the existence in the town during the Middle Ages of a Social or Religious Guild of St. John. One theory about the architecture of Thaxted church is that the pillars of the fine nave are those of the original church. Certain it is, that this portion of the building is the most ancient. But the general plan of the church may be safely ascribed to the first quarter of the fourteenth century. A few years later the south aisle and south transept were added, followed by the south porch. About 1377-80 the north transept and north aisle were begun by Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March and Ulster, but the work was not finished until many years had passed; and the internal decorations, of which a few remain, seem to bear the date of the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The tower and spire were built by the last Earl of March, and the north porch by Edward IV.—who also erected the chancel and its chapel aisles.

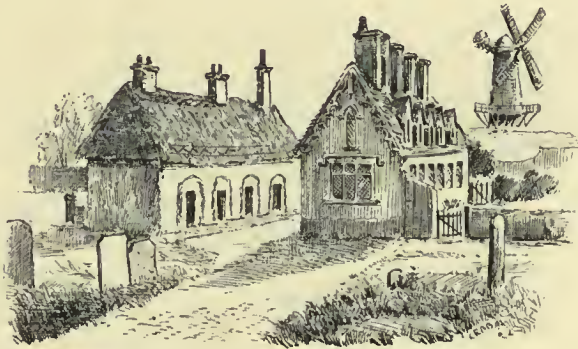
The north porch, which has been selected as a subject for an etching, is a very fine one, and here on the door is a plate with the inscription “Orate p’ aīābz Henrici Boyton & Joh’is. . . .” There are chapels in the church dedicated to Our Lady, St. Catherine, St. Lawrence, St. James, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. The roof of the Lady Chapel is carved in wood and decorated with painting of a somewhat uncommon order; the panels bearing the **M** of the Virgin, the sacred monogram **I.H.C.**, and lastly the chalice and host.

In the chapel of St. Catherine a capital, with the wheel carved thereon, is rather curious. The font has a peculiarity which is very noteworthy: it is surmounted by a tall, fixed crocketed carved top, beneath which hinged panels, six in number, enclose the intervening space. The walls of the chancel are almost entirely occupied by square windows, the heads of which are filled with elaborate tracery, an arrangement as beautiful as it is rare. A plain altar tomb in the south chapel is peculiar from the fact that it has evidently been purposely erected slantwise, that is to say, with a north-easterly direction, though the chancel is not built askew.

In the days of the Great Rebellion the church of Thaxted suffered sadly. Its beautifully coloured windows were smashed: the interesting fragments and remains may to this day be seen and admired. Patched and pieced irregularly, in some cases even held together by lumps of cement, these specimens of ancient art deserve a better fate. It would be a good opportunity for a wealthy lover of art to supply funds for the purpose of rescuing these windows from the destruction with which every gale threatens them. Carefully and reverently re-arranged in new leading, much might be done at a comparatively trifling cost. The parish, a poor one, cannot undertake the work. There is but little ancient wood carving in the church: fragments of the stalls of the choir, which were beautifully carved, may be seen on a screen in the tower arch. Beneath the high altar is a crypt which was opened a few years ago, the approach to which is by means of a stair in one of the south buttresses.

That this grand old church retains so much that is interesting, nay, even unique, is much to be marvelled at, seeing that in the Rebellion, after being the scene of a riot between the partisans of the vicar and the usurping Puritan minister, the edifice was converted for a time into a stable. Still more remarkable is it that on the exterior two crucifixes were permitted to remain ; one on the east end, the other above the north porch.

Skirting the churchyard, and unseparated from it by road



ALMSHOUSES AND MILL AT THAXTED.

or fence, stands the double row of little almshouses, of which a sketch is given. Some idea of their small dimensions may be obtained from the fact that the height of the doorways of the group on the left is under five feet. Beyond these on a small grassy plateau stands Thaxted windmill, and by this mill the field path leads away to the lanes in the direction of Horham Hall.

The Horham Hall of to-day is only a beautiful and an interesting portion of the family mansion erected by Sir John Cutte, Kt., "Under Treasurer of England," who died in 1520.

In Leland may be read a quaintly-worded description of the estates bought by "Old Cutte," and the dwellings erected thereon. Sir John, who also owned Childerley in Cambridgeshire, seems to have bought the Horham Hall estate from one Savelle, "a man of fair landes in Yorkshire." It appears that boundless hospitality was exercised at Horham, so much so that before the death of its second possessor the monetary affairs of the Cutts family were terribly embarrassed. How far Queen Elizabeth may have been to blame for this state of things it is not easy to say, but the facts remain that before her accession she was for a considerable time a visitor at Horham Hall, and that after she had come to the throne she considerably quartered the Spanish Ambassador and his suite for a protracted period as guests of the loyal but luckless owner, during a time of sickness in London.

Horham Hall is very irregularly built, but the general architectural effect is most pleasing. It is surrounded on three sides by the moat, still in its original state ; the fourth side has been filled in. The tower with its cupola-topped turret is picturesque, the crow-stepped gables of the great hall are striking in appearance, but the large window, and the pseudo-window, which forms a kind of passage from the hall daïs, are perhaps the most remarkable features in the building. The interior of the great hall, into which the entrance porch immediately leads through the screen, is very fine. The roof is divided into square panels, which for some curious reason it has been thought fit in recent times to ornament with stencilled copies of the "M" and the "chalice and host" decorations at Thaxted church! Upon the incongruity of this no further remark

need be made. In the windows are a few panes of ancient glass, upon which are represented the arms of the Cutts Family repeated on three shields; a portcullis and crown; a red rose and imperial crown; and a very rare form of the Prince of Wales' badge—the



THE MOAT, HORHAM HALL.

three ostrich feathers and coronet. The peculiarity of the badge in this instance is that the feathers are jewelled. The fireplace is very large. Round the entire hall runs an ornate stone skirting decorated with quatrefoils. From the hall, at the daïs end, an archway leads to the passage previously mentioned, which was

evidently part of the original design of the house, as by no other means could the other apartments be easily reached. The remaining rooms in the house, though by no means large, are well-proportioned, but they have unfortunately been to a great extent modernized. In writing of Great Dunmow a few pages back, mention was made of a "quarry" in the church, which bore a curious device. In the windows of the room on the left-hand side of the porch at Horham, "quarries" bearing two varieties of this device are to be seen.

The original Sir John Cutte had a brother Richard, whose estates were at Woodhall, Arkesden, and Matching in Essex. On the death of the second Sir John Cutts, Bart., the estates, or what was left of them at Horham and Childerley, came to a descendant of this brother, as the baronet died childless. This Cutts, of Arkesden, also named Richard, had two sons; the elder died unmarried, but the younger, named John, so distinguished himself that he deserves mention.

John Cutts was born in 1661, and seems to have entered as a fellow-commoner at Catherine Hall, Cambridge, in 1676. He did not take his degree. On the death of his father he found himself in the possession of about £2,000 per annum, and is next heard of as forming one of the suite of the Duke of Monmouth at the Hague. A man of refined literary tastes, and with some talent for writing verses, he appears in 1685 to have published a poem, entitled "*La Muse de Cavalier*." The next year Cutts appears as a volunteer in the army of Charles, Duke of Lorraine, fighting against the Turks in Hungary, where he greatly dis-

tinguished himself at the siege and capture of Buda, being the first to plant the flag upon the walls. In 1688 he was Colonel of a regiment in Holland, and came over thence to England with William of Orange as Lieutenant-Colonel of Sidney's English Foot. Cutts received a grant of "Jesuits' lands" in certain counties as a reward. He next went to Ireland, when he was



HORHAM HALL.

wounded at Limerick. At the battle of the Boyne he commanded a regiment known as "Cutts's Foot." In 1690 he was raised to the peerage with the title of Baron Cutts of Gowran, Ireland; and his University conferred upon him an honorary LL.D. After more service in Ireland, Lord Cutts proceeded to Flanders, and was present at the battle of Steinkirk, where his regiment was

cut to pieces, he himself being severely wounded in the foot. He commanded a brigade at Brest in the expedition which turned out so disastrously. In 1694 Lord Cutts was Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, and in the following year was sent to Antwerp on a political mission. At Namur such was his bravery that he earned for himself the sobriquet of "Salamander." At home he was both a royal favourite and a popular hero ; but the list of the important missions upon which he was sent, and the signal political services which he rendered, is too long to give in full. Lord Cutts was M.P. for Newport in the Isle of Wight, and previously for the county of Cambridge. Upon active service during the war of the Spanish Succession he greatly distinguished himself at the capture of Fort St. Michael, Venloo. His daring on this occasion was deemed to be a somewhat vainglorious exhibition, and Swift stigmatized Cutts as being "brave and brainless as the sword he wears." His orders at the storming of St. Michael were described by one of his subordinates as "unaccountable, and unaccountably carried out." When the Duke of Marlborough returned home in 1702-3, Lord Cutts remained abroad in command of the army. At the battle of Blenheim he was third in command. John Lord Cutts was twice married, but left no surviving children at his death, which took place January 26, 1707. As to the personal character of this fine soldier, opinions appear to differ. That he possessed the power of making his way in the world is evident, but none can be found to say that the rewards which he received for his signal services were by any means excessive. His bravery was beyond question ; his tactical skill may not have been derived from books, yet it suc-

ceeded. He was not trained as a diplomatist, yet he carried to a favourable issue all missions upon which he was sent. As an administrator, even in Ireland, where he was Lord Justice under the Duke of Ormond, Cutts obtained credit. One ventures to think, then, that the carping suggestion of Swift must have been the outcome of personal spite, for John Baron Cutts of Gowran could never have been "brainless."



THE BLACK DRAGON.

CHAPTER VII.

COGGESHALL.

THE little town of Coggeshall is an interesting spot to visit, even if one disregards the history and traditions of the place. The church is fine, the ruins of the chapel of St. Nicholas are of an uncommon type, the remains of the Cistercian Abbey merit attention, and lastly, the old dwellings of the clothiers in the town are, in one or two cases, most singular examples of domestic architecture. From a literary point of view there is much that is worthy of consideration. The Chronicle of Ralph of Coggeshall, the sixth Abbot, tells us almost all that is known of Richard I.; and in addition relates many a marvellous tale. The diary of an inhabitant, one Joseph Bufton, which extends from 1672 to 1699, contains many most interesting details as to local events, both spiritual and temporal; while an investigation into the history of the clothiers of Coggeshall reveals a few facts which are certainly worthy of note. The ecclesiastical history of the place is somewhat remarkable; the apparently powerful hold which the old creed had on the townsmen in 1519 stands in violent contrast to the iconoclastic zeal of a few years later. As early as 1532 the great crucifix near the abbey bridge was overthrown by a fanatic, one Robert Gardner, of

Dedham, being usually credited with the achievement. This worthy had, in company with three others, already committed a similar act of vandalism at Dovercourt. Later on Coggeshall furnished its quota of martyrs, the celebrated John Hawkes being the chief of them. In the days of the Stuarts nonconformity was quite the fashion in the town, and many and various were the sects therein. The correspondence at this period between Laud, Aylett, and Lambe is most voluminous, and certainly both curious and entertaining.

Coggeshall Church, dedicated to St. Peter-ad-Vincula, stands on the summit of a hill. It is large, with a lofty nave, clerestory and two aisles. The chancel has also a clerestory and aisles, which last have the same width as those of the nave. The weak point about the church is its tower, though in Coggeshall itself it is treason to say so. But the fact remains that the tower was built for a smaller church, and this was ascertained when restoration was undertaken some years ago. The tower is the oldest portion, therefore, of the existing building, and dates from the reign of Henry IV. Its battlements are crow-stepped, and there is a tradition that these were formerly surmounted by pinnacles and crosses. The south porch and its doorway are rather good. It would seem that the church was continually being enlarged till the reign of Henry VIII., at which period it assumed its present proportions. Then it was that the wealthy clothiers could afford, and did afford, to erect monuments which caused Weever to remark, "I haue not seene such rich monuments for so meane persons." One member of the Pecok or Paycocke family in 1505-6, by his will

gives orders for a fairly expensive funeral, but is eclipsed completely by Thomas, the third son of John Pecok, whose testamentary directions as to his burial in 1518 are singularly minute and excessively costly. He leaves 100 marks for gilding and carving the tabernacles of the altars of the Trinity and St. Margaret, 100 nobles for church reparation, and 500 marks for a chantry, besides a host of smaller payments too numerous to quote.

Remains of the brasses of Robert and Thomas Paycocke are still in the south aisle, and consist of their merchant's mark and initials. Later on a description of the house of a descendant of Thomas Paycocke will be given—a house the gateway of which furnished the subject of the etching which accompanies this chapter. It would indeed have been interesting had all the tombs and brasses enumerated by Weever yet remained, but many of them have vanished. The inscription from one lost monument is so curious as to be worth quoting. It was formerly on a slab on the south side of the chancel, and belonged to the tomb of William Goldwyre and his wives Isabel and Christian, 1514. The inscription ran as follows :—

“ Mary Moder mayden clere
Prey for me William Goldwyre
And for me Isabel his wyf
Lady for thy joyes fyf
Have mercy on Christian his second wyf
Swete Jesu for thy wowndys fyf.”

The Vicars of Coggeshall do not appear to have numbered among them any very eminent men. Perhaps the most distinguished was John Owen, the Puritan, whom “ Mr. Dr. Aylett, or

his lawful deputy," was required to institute in August, 1646. Owen was made Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, March 18, 1651, and left Coggeshall.

Poor Dr. Aylett! His troubles and trials were many and various, and his letters to Sir John Lambe are singularly amusing; extracts from two may well here be given. In March, 1637, he writes to the effect that the Vicar-General, who had been holding forth in the neighbourhood regarding spiritualities, had no sooner gone than "one sets up to confute that he had delivered." The "one" was a certain Edward Sparhawk, who was "neither licensed preacher or curate, but a suspended minister who has maintained conventicles in Coggeshall, where they refuse both the first and second payment of ship-money, nor will yet be brought to make a rate, though their cousin Aylett, who is lord of the town, is as forward as any in the country." The letter goes on to suggest that the magistrates should be directed to search the studies of the vicar, John Dod, and of his son and curate; also those of the curate of Hedingham and of Edward Sparhawk. Enclosed in the letter are notes of a sermon preached by Sparhawk at a christening, the text being Jeremiah viii. 20. It would appear to have been couched in rather strong language; allusions being made to "heavy impositions and cursed adorations" as "calamities from which Christians hoped for delivery." "There was no Jeremy left in the church to stand between the altar and the temple," etc., etc. The cause of this desertion was declared to be "our altars, and such superstitious adorations and bowing at names and such new idolatrous mixtures of religion and the treading

down of God's people." Sparhawk had been previously suspended both at Norwich and in London.

In another letter, dated August 7, 1639, Aylett begins playfully, and alludes to a possible visit to Sir John—a visit the pleasure of which will, he says, be increased "if I may be so happy as there to meet the fairest of your flock in her new pasture or inclosure."



THE "WOOLPACK" INN.

This was Barbara Lambe, one of whose letters has previously been quoted.

Dr. Aylett next enters upon the question of the altar rails quarrel, which at that time greatly stirred the Essex populace. It seems that two clergymen refused to come out of the rails to administer, and in consequence indictments were laid against them for "denying the Communion." It seems that the lord of the manor of Coggeshall, a namesake of the worthy doctor, was the

foreman of the jury ; his Christian name was Thomas, and he died October 19, 1650, aged eighty-one.

Dr. Aylett, in the course of his letter, points out the various legal aspects of the case ; then, after stating that “ people grow mad here, and run headily their own ways,” he expresses a hope that “ we may be preserved from the jurisdiction of temporal lawyers, else *Domine miserere nostri* will be the best defence for me.”



COGGESHALL ABBEY.

Near the church stands the old “ Woolpack ” Inn, with its picturesque carved beams and windows. The interior of this house is certainly interesting, the arrangement of the roof timbers being especially worth notice. Two facts are known with regard to the antiquity of this house of entertainment—viz., that on Shrove Tuesday, 1678, a small bullock was roasted whole there, and that on May-day, 1693, “ ye soldiers set up a maypole at ye Woolpacke door.” At least so Bufton chronicles. In a house in Church Lane

there is a rather remarkable fireplace of carved oak. Plinths at the side are supported by the figures of boys bearing garlands. Wreaths and an ornament surmount the central panel, and two more wreaths fill in the space between plinths and panel. The panel bears the following inscription :—

“ The houre runeth
And time flieth
As floure fadeth
So man dieth.
Sic transit gloria mundi.”

—the ends of the four lines being decorated with representations of an hour-glass, a cherub, a withered flower, and a skull, respectively. By no means a cheerful inscription for the living-room of a house.

The house now known as Church Street Factory was built by a certain Richard White, and bears on the outside a good deal of carved floral decoration on the beams ; the doors and windows are surmounted by texts, such as “ Fear God and keep his commandments.” Other houses there are with carved beams, of which the oldest bear dates 1565 and 1585 respectively. The first-named has also the initials of the builder, T. C. The pattern on this beam is extremely bold and very uncommon. From the central date-bearing shield run mythological monsters and conventional foliage and flowers ; birds and masks at intervals. The 1585 beam has a well-known pattern on it. In another part of the town there is, or there was but a short time since, a beam curiously carved with unicorns.

The Abbey of Coggeshall was a Cistercian house, and was founded towards the end of the first half of the twelfth century. According to most authorities the founders were Stephen and his

Queen. Whether these royal personages were the actual founders or not, it is certain that the Queen at least was a generous benefactress, giving as an endowment the manor of Coggeshall. Numerous other endowments followed as years went on, and in little over a century the house became wealthy, its value amounting in 1291 to £116 10s. At the time of the Dissolution the revenue was variously estimated at £251 2s. and £298 8s.

The old Abbey stood near to the river, as was usual with houses of the Cistercian order; and in all probability its general plan was similar to the plans of other kindred establishments. The gatehouse mentioned by the Abbot, Ralph Coggeshall, when he relates the marvellous vision which appeared to "Brother Robert," has now vanished, but in all probability it stood close by the ruined chapel of St. Nicholas. This chapel is a remarkable relic of old brickwork. The east and west windows are triple lancets within, containing arches, the side windows being single lancets. The door on the south side is new. Sedilia, a double piscina, and a credence are in the wall on the south side, while on the north there is a restored aumbry near to the east end. The roof is thatched, and has lately been put into repair. From the fact that the foundations of a font have been discovered, and that human bones were dug up before the high altar, it would seem to have been a fully-consecrated building. The walls show a few traces of mural painted decoration, but in the design there is nothing of special merit. It should be added that for many years the chapel of St. Nicholas was converted into a barn.

In the remains of the Abbey buildings themselves, perhaps the

most interesting portion is the ambulatory, which joins the present Abbey Farm House to the projecting gable-ended building. One sketch shows the passage through one end of the ambulatory, but the best idea of the range of buildings will be obtained from the other view.

Above the ambulatory is a room supposed to have been a



THE AMBULATORY.

dormitory. The building farthest on the left of the sketch is, for some reason, known by the name of the Monk House. It has an open timber roof and lancet windows. The Abbey Farm House seems to have been built with materials furnished from the ruined Abbey Church. Its porch, which is of rather later date than the rest of the house, bears the initials $\text{R}^{\text{B}}_{\text{A}}$ cut on a slab above the

figures 1581. The B may stand for either Bacon or Benyon, and the letters R B will be found again on the oak carving inside the hall.

This hall, of which a sketch is given, is lined with panelling of different sorts and kinds : the spoils of at least four different rooms are there. The room above would be a very fine one if it were cleared of the paint which disfigures its panels and the partitions



THE ABBEY FARM.

which subdivide it. Curiously enough, owing to these subdivisions the fireplace (carved and unpainted) is now in the passage. There are in the house a few arches, one being rather uncommon. It is pointed, built of plain unmoulded brick, and springs on one side from a corbel, the other being supported by a round brick pillar, with a stone cap. Of the grand Abbey Church there now remains no trace above ground. In seasons of great drought the

plan of the foundations appears, and hence it has been possible to measure its proportions with tolerable accuracy. But of its appearance there are no traditions; no old print exists to give an idea of its style and features. We know that the church was opened, and the great altar was dedicated to the blessed Virgin in 1167, by Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London, during the reign of Simon Toni, the second abbot.

The Abbots of Coggeshall, with the exception of the sixth, Ralph de Coggeshall the Chronicler, do not appear to have been men of any particular mark. The names only of many of them have been handed down to our times, and the list is far from complete. Ralph de Coggeshall needs a few words, as by his writings he has laid his countrymen under obligations. He appears to have been esteemed a very learned man in his own day, and when he became Abbot of Coggeshall is reported to have devoted his time entirely to study—not quite, perhaps, to the benefit of the house over which he ruled. His works consist of an Appendix to Ralph Niger's Chronicle of the deeds of the "Emperors and Kings of France and England," from the capture of the Cross to the eleventh year of Henry III. Whether he was or was not the author of a Chronicle of the Holy Land has been disputed, but into the rights of the dispute inquiry need not be made here. In his "*Chronicon Anglicanum*" he gives us many particulars about Richard I., doubtless not all of them quite accurate, but still full of interest. Of Coggeshall he tells little. He relates the forcible seizure of twenty-two horses from the Abbey by the knights and attendants of King John in 1216. Two years later he mentions his own retirement,

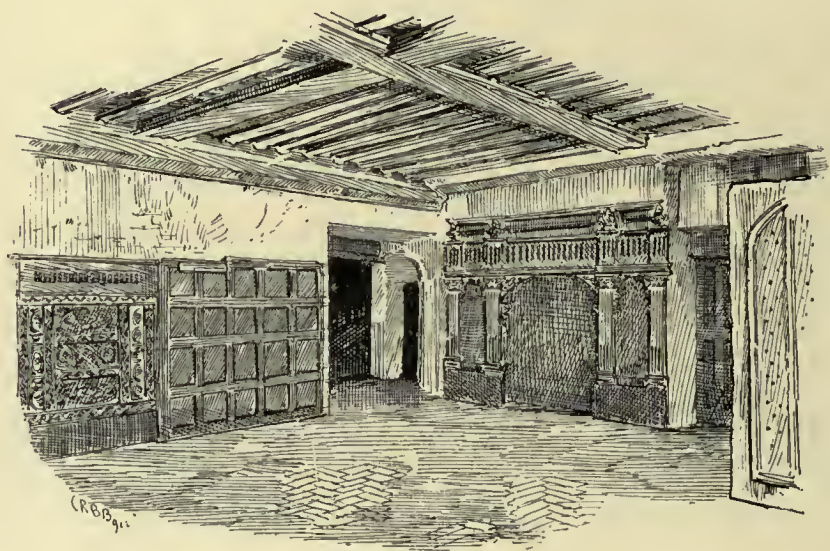
after being abbot for eleven years and two months. Ralph was succeeded by Benedict, who died in 1223.

The most curious entry refers to the catching by some fishermen at Orford Ness of a man-fish, or sea-monster, in the reign of Henry II., when Bartholomew de Glanville was the constable of Orford Castle. This man-fish was caught in a net, and appeared to be a human being. He ate flesh and fish, whether raw or cooked; always, however, squeezing the moisture from raw fish before eating. Maintaining obstinate silence, the use of torture was employed to force the man-fish to speak or utter a sound, but in vain. Even hanging the poor creature up by the heels was of no avail. Taken to church as an experiment, the man-fish took not the slightest notice of the ceremonials, nor did he adore the Host. Once his keepers, having netted in a stretch of sea-shore, permitted him to swim. Diving under the nets, the man-fish amused himself by mocking at his former captors, and might have escaped—had he pleased. It is, however, related that he returned back to prison, where his gaolers were lamenting his loss. Whether eventually he tired of life ashore or was treated with cruelty too great to be borne the chronicle does not tell, but at length the man-fish escaped, and swam out to sea. It is strange to note that even in the present day around the Suffolk coast there yet linger traditions of this man-fish of which Ralph de Coggeshall tells the curious tale.

The story of the pale-green boy and girl who came from out of the earth is noticeable. The boy died, but the girl lived for some years as a servant in the family of Sir Richard de Calne, and is

reported to have been pert in speech. The tale of a familiar spirit which conversed in the local dialect as well as in English and Latin, and disputed on religious subjects with the chaplain of Sir Osborne de Bradwell, is clearly a case of a cleric having ventriloquial gifts coupled with a taste for practical joking.

The clothing trade in England seems to have arisen as early as



THE HALL OF THE ABBEY FARM.

the time of Henry I., when some Flemings who had been flooded out of their own land settled over here. When once established the industry soon increased; the manufacture of cloth spread in different directions, and it soon became the most important in the country. How it was fostered by Queen Philippa is history, and need not be recounted; but it would appear that Coggeshall was benefited, as the monks founded a chantry for the Queen in their

abbey—probably out of gratitude. In the reign of Richard II. the bays and serges of Essex were renowned far and wide, and for a special make known as “Coggeshall Whites” the town became famous. Acts were passed in the reigns of Richard II. and Edward IV. to prevent imposition and imitation. Mary and Philip, by statute, prevented cloth from being made to sell anywhere but in a market town where it had customarily been made for ten years. Elizabeth reduced the term from ten years to seven, or an apprenticeship of seven years. In this Act the industry is styled “the Feate or Misterye of making, weaving or rowing of Clothe or Carseye.” The exploits of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands during the persecution gave a great impetus to the clothing trade in Essex, for many persecuted Holländers fled there, bringing both skill and trade secrets with them. To their advent may also be ascribed not a little of the sectarian spirit which at once began to manifest itself in religious matters, and which, in after days, rendered the county a stronghold of nonconformity. The same reasons which brought clothiers to Essex drove them away, and the action of Laud caused an exodus to New England. Under the Commonwealth the trade revived, and it is stated that the clothiers were at their greatest height of prosperity between 1650 and 1660; but from that date until the beginning of the present century the trade gradually dwindled and finally ceased.

That the clothiers should have had their trade guild and Wool Hall is not to be wondered at. The guild, of which the name of the dedication is now lost, seems to have had a chapel of its own. This chapel was converted into a Wool Hall in the reign of

Edward VI., and was pulled down in 1787, at which time it was known as the Corn Market-House. The remains of another Hall are still existing in Coggeshall, but they are not architecturally of much interest. The interior contains a fireplace, a seat, and a small recess or niche. Yet, long after the guilds had disappeared, the Fullers and Weavers of Coggeshall had a grand procession in honour of Blaize or Blasius, the Bishop of Sebaste. In Bufton's



GREAT TEY.

diary are preserved the accounts of these processions, and what is more, some execrable poetry which he wrote for various festive occasions. The last procession seems to have taken place June 15, 1791.

The house of Thomas Paycocke, who died in 1580, now needs description. It stands in West Street, and is a long, low one-storied building, now divided into three tenements. The fine old linen-pattern panelled gates close an archway at one end of the



Gateway at Coggeshall.

house—an archway which leads to the yard at the back. Each gate-post is surmounted by a carved figure, that on the right being a man carrying a mask, that on the left a monk. I conjecture, rightly or wrongly, that these gates came from elsewhere, possibly from the Abbey, as there is an evident dissimilarity between the workmanship of them and that of the carved beam above. The gates, the posts, the spandrels, and the carved lintel are ecclesiastical in character. The carved beam, some nineteen yards in length, is quite the reverse. Here are to be found a most curious collection of ornamental designs. Tendrils which terminate in semi-human figures, male and female, wave along the entire length of the beam, each loop containing a different leaf and flower, besides, in the three central spaces, the initials of the builder and his merchant's mark. The floral parts of this design are very curious; the arum lily occurs carved after nature, and other flowers in like manner; but here and there from a blossom issues a hideous grinning head. The front of the house is patterned regularly with plaster panels. The beams and the panels of the ground-floor rooms are really remarkable; large and small, each beam is covered with most delicate and elaborate tracery, some of the wall panels being even more ornate. A sketch of the initials and merchant's mark of Thomas Paycocke will be seen at the end of this chapter. The Paycockes were wealthy clothiers indeed, and a long line of them flourished in Coggeshall. From the inscription on a now destroyed tomb the first notice of this family is obtained; it was that of "Thomas Paycocke, quondam Carnifex de Coggeshall," who died in 1461.

In the parish register it is recorded that on February 14, 1584, was buried "John Peaycocke, the last of his name in Coggeshall."

On the subject of the name of this town much discussion has



HOWCHINS.

taken place; the ingenious theories which have been advanced to account for its origin are most remarkable. It is, however, useless to recapitulate them here. One fact is, however, noticeable: In the parish of Croyland, or Crowland, Lincolnshire, a

portion is named Gogguslands ; here in Coggeshall, or Goggashael, a part is called Crowland.

While staying in Coggeshall I heard of a curious inscription in a farmhouse two or three miles out of the town, which seemed worth inspecting, and as the way led by the old-fashioned



GREAT TEY CHURCH.

manor-house of Howchins or Fouchins the walk was well worth taking. The inscription was duly inspected, after a tramp along one of the most miry lanes I have ever had the misfortune to traverse. The inscription is surmounted by the arms of the Astle family, and runs as follows :—"FONERCEAPA PONE ENDE,"

the meaning of which is inexplicable. It is to be found in a house called Tey Brook, and not far from Great Tey Church. In the room which contains the inscription are a few panes of ancient coloured glass of Tudor date, amongst which a portcullis of rather peculiar form occurs. Great Tey Church is a fine one even now despite the fact that it was originally double the size and cruciform. The tower is good Norman, and one would imagine that the structure must have been very imposing when the nave and transepts were in existence. These, it would seem, were standing in Morant's time, but becoming ruinous, to save expense were pulled down. Near the church stands an old house with a quaint gable, on which the traces of carving are yet to be discerned. From Great Tey back to Coggeshall by the high road instead of by the lane is more pleasant walking, but decidedly less exciting. There is a certain element of adventure in journeying along a pathway where there is a probability that the next step will land you in mud above the knees.

A family of the name of Coggeshall, it may as well be mentioned, was established in the place as far back as 1149, the then representative being Sir Thomas de Coggeshall. Two generations afterwards a branch of the family seems to have settled at Codham Hall, Wethersfield, about four miles from Sible Hedingham. The reader will remember that Sir William Coggeshall, knight, married Antiocha or Mary, the daughter of Sir John Hawkwood. This Sir William died in 1424, and was the eighth of his name in succession, as far as can now be traced. A branch of this old Essex family emigrated to America many years ago, of which the descendants on

the other side of the Atlantic are at the present day somewhat numerous.

In the county of Essex, when anybody either does or proposes to do anything more than ordinarily foolish, it is customary to speak of it as a "Coggeshall job." The origin of the term has never been ascertained, but the "jobs," real or fictitious, which have been handed down strongly resemble the tales told of the Wiltshire "Moonrakers." Certainly of Coggeshall natives some curious stories are related at the present day ; two of the most modern may be cited as examples. A man was told by his master to transplant an apple-tree. He cut the tree down first, and then dug up and carefully replanted the roots. To prevent people from being run over by railway trains a native proposed that the engines should always be fenced in, for then, as he expressed it, "the public will be safe on the other side."



CHAPTER VIII.

SAFFRON WALDEN.

THE early history of the town of Saffron Walden is both scanty and uneventful. In the days of Edward Confessor, Ansgar, his Master of the Horse, seems to have been its possessor. The town was then called Walden simply, a name which was subsequently changed to Waldenburgh. As at Witham so at Walden, the name of Chipping or Cheping occurs, and this probably originated when, by the license of the Empress Matilda, the market was removed to Walden from Newport, a village a few miles distant. At the time of the Conquest, Walden was granted to Geoffrey de Magnaville, and Saffron Walden Castle traditionally was built by de Magnaville, but it is curious to read in the account of the travels of Cosmo, Hereditary Prince, and afterwards third Grand Duke of Tuscany, who made a tour in England in 1669, that at that date it was called the Castle of Ansgar. In the year 1252 a famous tournament was held at Walden, at which a knight, Sir Ernauld de Mounteney, was slain by Sir Roger de Leeburn, not without some suspicion of foul play. It was not until the reign of Edward III. that the additional name of Saffron was given to the town, a name which still remains, though the saffron plant is no longer cultivated in the neighbour-

hood. In the year 1500 a Religious or Social Guild was established, its name being the Guild of the Holy Trinity. Thirteen years later the vicar, John Leche, and Dame Bradbury, his sister, petitioned that the guild might be incorporated. It appears that a market had been started anew at Newport, and that the trade of Saffron Walden suffered in consequence, as the chapmen and traders who had been wont to resort to Walden Market deserted it. The petition was granted and the guild was incorporated, license being given for a schoolmaster and a priest, the former to teach grammar in a schoolhouse called the Trinity House, built for the purpose ; the priest was to live in the house called Trinity College, near the north door of the church, and was to receive £10 yearly. The next step was to obtain a grant of the market at an annual rent of £10, in lieu of the former tolls.

Henry VIII. and Queen Katharine of Arragon were both members of the guild, as were also Wolsey, the Bishop of Norwich, the Earl and Countess of Essex, and Sir John Cutts. Early in the reign of Edward VI. the guild was dissolved, but a charter of incorporation was obtained for the town of Saffron Walden, in which the care of the guild school and almshouses was vested in the new corporation. Queen Mary confirmed the charter, as also did her sister. Charles II. attacked the privileges of the borough in 1683, thereby causing not a little confusion in the municipal affairs, and a very unsatisfactory state of things continued for some time. James II. endeavoured to profit by the unsettled condition of Walden, and instead of confirming the old charter granted a new one, which contained a clause giving power to the King to remove

the mayor and others from office when he pleased. In January, 1687-8, an order was sent to eject the mayor and six of the corporation from office. The order was obeyed, but fresh members were elected. The King at once required these to be also expelled, and as a result of his action great confusion reigned for at least a year, till a proclamation, intended to act as a means of regaining popularity, in 1689 authorized the replacement of the ejected burgesses. Five years later the present charter was granted by William III.

The following extracts from the State Papers have been selected as possessing some interest. In August, 1610, the Vicar of Walden, by name William Bayley, and a certain Thomas Dawney, were engaged in discovering recusants. One William Atkinson was called upon to assist, but refused, using "threatening speeches," for which cause he was duly reported to the Council. In 1631 the vexed question of administration at the altar rails or in the body of the church appears to have caused disquiet in Walden, as may be gathered from the certificate of Jane Leader and twenty-four other women of that town. This document declares that "Goody Taylor" was a "modest and sober woman," who had not opposed their minister out of any undutiful disposition, but that she had not come up to the communion table, being a weak woman, and the communion table standing upon "lofty and bleak stairs." The paper concludes with a prayer that if the place formerly used be not approved, the Commissary would be pleased to appoint one that is more convenient. In the Court of High Commission in February, 1634-5, George Burdett, clerk, of Yarmouth, stood charged with a series of offences. It seems that he had during a course of years, at

Walden among other places, preached a number of remarkable discourses. Burdett was a fully-ordained priest, and apparently a very vigorous opponent of the High Church party. Amongst other things he is charged with the omission of the Communion Service in 1632, and of the Ten Commandments on several occasions. The sentence of the court was an order of suspension from his office and condemnation in costs. At this time it would seem that the local clergy were causing the ecclesiastical authorities not a little annoyance by performing the service whenever they could without wearing a surplice.

On February 8, 1636-7, Dr. Edward Martin writes an interesting letter to Sir John Lambe, in which he details the troubles of the bearer, one Burgis. It seems that Burgis was the son of a prebend of Chester, who had spent his whole fortune in ecclesiastical disputes with the Puritans. Burgis had been appointed school-master of Walden seven years previously, but had been discharged upon a false charge of holding puritanical principles. Reinstated, the other side endeavoured to obtain his dismissal by an accusation of Popery and Arminianism. This attempt failed, but through the Chancellor of London, Dr. Duck, the poor man was ejected, it being suggested that his acquirements were insufficient. To defend himself on these three occasions had cost Burgis so much that he was completely destitute. Sir John Lambe is earnestly begged to befriend him.

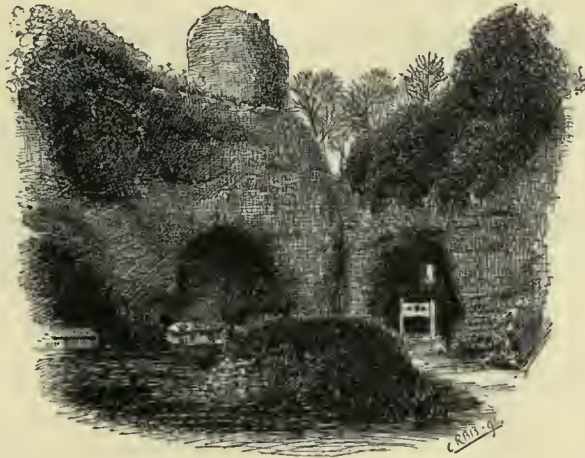
A letter addressed by John Newce from Walden to his father at Broxbourne, and dated 1576, is so curious that, though unimportant, a digest may be worth giving. The son appears to be

studying, as well as trading, at Walden, but begins his letter with an expression of thanks to his father for sending him a pair of kine and a groat. He continues that he cannot yet satisfy his father's expectations, for, "as Troy was not built in one day, so money cannot be got in a little space," and concludes by expressing a hope that "God will so prosper my studies, and give such increase to my labours, that I shall be able hereafter to write more learnedly and cunningly."

There is a curious and rare tract, printed probably about 1669, entitled "The Flying Serpent; or, Strange News from Essex." It contains an amusing story of a monstrous serpent which "hath at divers times been seen" at Henham-on-the-Mount, near Saffron Walden. The description of the fabulous creature is very grotesque, and the rude woodcut appended fully equals the description. There is not much in the tale as a tale, for unfortunately the reader is not informed of the ultimate fate of the monster. Nobody ever seems to have been armed when the serpent appeared, and wisely the latter did not care to remain till weapons were fetched. The latter part of the tract is taken up with "a discourse of other serpents, and particularly of a cockatrice killed at Walden." After a description of the basilisk, or cockatrice, in which it is styled "the most venomous of all others, it breaketh stones and blasteth all plants with his breath," the legend relates that a number of men were killed by one at Saffron Walden. However, a valiant knight made a "Coat of Christal Glass," which was so pure that the cockatrice expired at the sight of it. The sword of the knight was hung up in Walden Church, and his effigies set up in brass there, near which

a "table hanged, wherein was contained all the story of the adventure." During the rebellion this picture was supposed to be superstitious, and was broken by the soldiers, showing, as the writer remarks, that they were also "of a venemous nature as well as the cockatrice." A curious mingling of the English legend of the Dragon of Wantley and the classic myth of the Gorgon's Head.

Of Saffron Walden Castle the lower portion only of the keep



SAFFRON WALDEN CASTLE.

remains, with the exception of a fragment of a small tower which stands detached at one corner. It is built of rubble and flint, and the walls are at least twelve feet thick. In the centre are the remains of a very thick pillar which formerly supported the roof of the basement of the keep. Marks can be seen in the walls which show where the beams used to go. Round the walls in the semi-circular recesses are now preserved a few stone coffins, the ancient stocks and pillory. The Castle has no history; the name of the

traditional builder has been mentioned, but how or when the place went to ruin can never now be known.

The Church of St. Mary, Saffron Walden, with its fine modern spire, is large and noteworthy. The most picturesque view of it is probably that from the Castle when the sun is low. This view, however, is hardly better than two others in Church Street, one where a narrow lane leads up an ascent, the houses on the left being of a very old-world character; the other from beneath the arched gateway of a yard, where the carved spandrels of the gate-arch form a fitting frame. In style the Church is Perpendicular, and the building appears to have been commenced in the reign of Henry VI., continued in the reign of Henry VII., and finished in that of his successor. Both the north and south porches are large and good, with parvise-chambers; that in the north porch being used for corporation purposes. Within the Church the carving above and between the arches in the nave has a very beautiful effect, and the same remark applies to the arcading on the wall of the north aisle. Beneath the high altar is the Howard Vault, now closed, in which are buried ten Earls of Suffolk. Formerly a great number of brasses existed in the Church, but when repairs were undertaken at the end of the last century these disappeared. It is stated that some of them are preserved at Audley End. One tomb in the south chapel is interesting, being that of Lord Chancellor Audley. It is a black marble altar tomb, and originally stood in the chancel. The armorial bearings which ornament its sides are very much defaced, but the carving of the upright slab at the back of the monument is excellently preserved.



The Old Sun Inn. Saffron Walden.

Sir Thomas Audley, K.G., was born in 1488, and it is stated that he was a student at Magdalen College, Cambridge. Afterwards coming to London, he entered at the Inner Temple, where he was autumn reader in 1526. At this time he had been town clerk of Colchester for some years, and had also been returned to Parliament. Audley was one of those men who get on in the world. Though in the household of Wolsey, yet the Cardinal's fall did not check his advancement; and Audley succeeded to the offices of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Speaker of the House of Commons, vacated by Sir Thomas More, then raised to the Lord Chancellorship. In November, 1531, he was appointed King's Serjeant, and in the following year, upon the resignation of More, Audley was nominally made Keeper of the Great Seal, though in reality he was Lord Chancellor. Audley presided over the court at the trials both of More and Fisher in a manner which has never been esteemed creditable. He died in the fifty-sixth year of his age on the 30th of April, 1544, having resigned all office a few days previously. Among the other rewards which his subservience to the wishes of Henry VIII. obtained for him was a peerage. The contrast between the lives of Marney and Audley is very great: both were the favoured servants of the same king, yet none ever impugned the motives or actions of the former, while the public life of the latter has been universally condemned.

There are many old houses scattered about in the streets of Saffron Walden, and of these the old "Sun Inn" is the most interesting. The portion which was selected for the etched plate is now unfortunately the only original bit left, as the hand of the

restorer has been at work. To such a pitch has this restoration been carried that a carved beam dated 1600 was actually imported and built into the wall. Spurious plaster-work is also visible, and though the group of buildings is sufficiently picturesque in the dusk, by daylight the illusion is dispelled. There is some tradition that Cromwell occupied this house, a tradition which, in the absence of



OLD HOUSES AT BRIDGE END.

any corroborative evidence, may be at once dismissed. The large plaster figures on the gable look as if they had some legendary history, but hitherto the writer has been unable to obtain any clue to their meaning. Certain it is that there are very few houses of a similar character to be seen now-a-days. The interior of the old "Sun Inn" is nearly as interesting as the exterior; the beams

and wooden archways are heavy, and appear to have been fairly well looked after ; but there is very little in the way of carving.

At the corner of a street called Bridge End, where a narrow lane, by name Myddylton Place, joins it, there are several old houses, the corner one being furnished with a well-carved corner-post. Here half-timbered houses are numerous, and some of them are good specimens of domestic work, notably those which now



THE "EIGHT BELLS" INN.

stand a few yards down Myddylton Place, and which are used as a malt-house or corn-store. The name Myddylton Place is a reminiscence of a Walden family called Myddylton once owning property on this spot. Their home was called Hogg's Green House, but it passed into the possession of the Recorder of Walden, George Nicholls, towards the end of the sixteenth century. A relic of this family also still remains in the shape of a well-carved fireplace, which bears on its massive upper beam the syllables MYD and

DYL, on a scroll between which stands a TON, boldly executed as a rebus, on which last an initial appears. The ends of this beam are finished off with conventional vine tendrils and bunches of grapes. Lower down in Bridge End, on both sides of the street, are interesting old houses, and of one of them, the "Eight Bells" Inn, a sketch is given. This old inn has some good carving on the beams beneath the windows, and the plaster panelling is of very fair quality.

Among the most worthy of the natives of Saffron Walden was the learned writer and honest statesman Sir Thomas Smÿth. He was born in 1514, and was the son of John Smÿth, who served as High Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1539. Thomas Smÿth was educated at the Walden Grammar School, and afterwards entered at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he obtained a fellowship in 1531, and a few years later became University Public Orator. He next proceeded abroad for the purpose of study, and obtained a degree of D.C.L. at Padua. Returning to Cambridge, he took his LL.D., and filled the office of Vice-Chancellor in 1542-3. On the accession of Edward VI. he entered the service of the Protector Somerset, through whose patronage he was rewarded by various appointments, amongst them being that of Provost of Eton. In April, 1549, he was made Secretary of State and received the honour of knighthood. When Somerset fell Smÿth came under suspicion, and was committed to the Tower. Here he employed his time in writing works of a religious character, of which an MS. copy is in the British Museum. Having regained his liberty, he was fortunate enough to be restored to his post of

Secretary of State, and in addition was sent on an embassy to France. During the reign of Mary, Smÿth being an ardent Protestant, stood in much danger, but his life was spared—it may be out of gratitude for the kindly way in which he had treated certain persecuted Catholics in the previous reign. On the accession of Elizabeth his star was again in the ascendant, and he was employed upon many most important State affairs, such as the revision of the Prayer-book, peace negotiations with France, and embassies. He was now a Privy Councillor and Chancellor of the Order of the Garter. For the last four years of his life he again held the office of Secretary of State, succeeding the Marquis of Winchester. He died in August, 1576, at Hill Hall, and was buried at Theydon Mount, in Essex. His benefactions to his native town were both useful and valuable, so that it is not a matter for astonishment that the memory of this worthy old Walden man is cherished there to this day.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth a most extraordinary literary controversy took place, in which a Walden man was one of the chief participators; the story of which is set forth in full in Disraeli. Gabriel Harvey was an author, the dear friend of the poet Spenser, to whose "*Faëry Queene*" Harvey's poem, signed Hobynoll, is prefixed. That Harvey was a pedant there is no doubt, and of his excessive vanity there are ample proofs; but he was also a man of education and no little literary skill. Having conceived the idea that hexameter verses were suitable to the English language—which, of course, they were not—he was ill-advised enough to claim to have reformed English poetry. Some

of his friends, with perhaps more zeal than discretion, having praised Harvey in sonnets, the latter was weak enough to publish the collection. He had two brothers, Richard and John, and his father was a ropemaker in Walden, a wealthy man. Gabriel was entered at Christ's College, Cambridge, was for eight years fellow of Pembroke Hall, where he made the poet Spenser's acquaintance, afterwards obtained a fellowship at Trinity Hall, and narrowly missed the Mastership of that Society. In 1585 the University of Oxford gave him the degree of D.C.L. Of his brothers, Richard took holy orders, John practised as a physician. Both claimed to be experts in the study of astrology, and managed to alarm the public with predictions of earthquakes until it was found that their prophecies remained unfulfilled. Then it was that the wits and buffoons of the period began to make reprisals. Tarleton, the jester, made sport of Richard, the chief offender, on the stage, Elderton wrote ballads which held him up to ridicule, and some years later Nash, when engaged in defending the memory of his dead friend from the onslaughts of Gabriel, heaped scurrilous and abusive satire upon all three unfortunate brothers. Gabriel answered Nash with the sharpest invective that his genius could supply, and pamphlet succeeded pamphlet on both sides, till Nash finally so far overstepped the bounds of decency as to cause the intervention of the Archbishop of Canterbury to put an end to the unseemly paper war. His intervention took the form of the following order:—"That all Nashe's bookes and Dr. Harvey's bookes be taken wheresover they may be found, and that none of the said bookes be ever printed hereafter." Hence it is that the

tracts and pamphlets concerned in this dispute are excessively rare. In the last letter of Nash, entitled "Have with you to Saffron Walden," the personal appearance of the unlucky Gabriel Harvey is attacked in the grossest terms, and a most quaint woodcut is appended, interesting because, as far as is known, it is the only portrait of Harvey in existence. It is needless to add that the cut does not appear to be a flattering likeness.

Two more antiquities remain to be noticed in Walden. Upon one side of the town are some earthworks, now known as the Pell or Repel ditches, though other designations, such as Battle, Peddle, Besle, and Paigle may also be found in documents. The Repel ditches were evidently fortifications, and, moreover, the place itself has been the scene of a sanguinary fight, to judge from the number of skeletons—some 200—found there a few years since. From relics which were discovered amid the bones there is reason to conclude that the skeletons were those of Roman soldiers.

Near the Castle, on the open space of ground known as the Common, a number of curious circles called the Maze are cut in the turf. The origin of this maze is quite lost : some have asserted that it was a British *cursus*, or place of exercise for soldiery, though it is not easy to conceive how this idea first originated. Lord Braybrooke, on the authority of Gough, states that the maze was cut by a shoemaker.

A short distance outside the town stand the picturesque Alms-houses of Audley End. They are built of brick, and appear to be early fifteenth-century work. It seems to be doubtful whether there was ever any endowment attached to them, nor can any

absolute connection with the former Abbey be traced. The buildings seem to have partaken more of the nature of free-quarters than regular almshouses; though it is known that the first Earl of Suffolk made an allowance to the inmates—an allowance which his widow discontinued. The buildings were at that time, or for that time, called "My Lord's Almshouses." In the Chronicle of Walden Abbey, on the festival of St. Mark, 1258, it is stated that Fulco, Bishop of London, and Hugo de Balsham consecrated the Church



AUDLEY END ALMSHOUSES.

of Walden, and that the last-named prelate, on the same day, did a like office for the Chapel of "Infirmaria," granting an indulgence to those who visited it on the feast of its dedication. In an inquisition dated the 46th of Edward III., it is stated that Humphrey, Earl of Essex, Hereford, and Northampton, was seized of the advowson of the hospital of the Abbey of Walden. Now these almshouses have in former times been known as the Hospital Farm. The probability is that they were built upon the old site of the Infirmaria. The Almshouses consist of two courts, one of which is used as free-

quarters for a number of aged women, and the other is fitted up as a farm. The remains of a chapel are there, and in many of the windows are fragments of stained glass of all ages and dates and kinds—the strangest *olla podrida* imaginable. In the Farm House kitchen there is a huge fireplace, on to which has been pieced a quantity of coarse oak carving, evidently formerly belonging to some destroyed part of the mansion of Audley End. But the exterior of this old-world range of buildings is very picturesque; the brickwork, though much weather-worn, has some really elegant mouldings, and the careless arrangement of the large and small gables in the front is most distinctly pleasing.



CHAPTER IX.

COLCHESTER AND LEXDEN.

WHEN investigating the history of this most ancient town, it is hardly possible to avoid being struck with the immense amount of literature connected with it. Not indeed that the associations of Colchester are unworthy of such distinction; far from it, for, whether considered from an archæological or from a historical point of view, it is certainly one of the most interesting places in the kingdom; nay, more, one of the most remarkable. The letters, tracts, and narratives relating to its historic siege are very numerous, while the papers and books which have for their subject the antiquities of the town are so many that the bare perusal of them would occupy weeks of close reading. The antiquarian war which has been waged with regard to Colchester Castle is an instance in point—a paper war, long protracted, obstinately contested, and even yet liable to break out again at any moment. But this is not the place in which to discuss the question as to whether the Castle was or was not the temple of Claudius, or to give the pros and cons of the views that the chief Museum Room therein was castle chapel or chapel crypt. The writer must here

be permitted to avoid discussion of disputed points and merely to express his own opinions.

Probably the earliest mention of Colchester—or, to give it its ancient name, Camulodunum—is to be met with in the writings of Dio Cassius, who there locates the Royal seat of Cunobelin; and Camulodunum included both Colchester and its present suburb Lexden. Conquered by Claudius, A.D. 44, Camulodunum was raised to the dignity of a Colonia, and to the deified Claudius a temple was there erected. It may be here remarked that in the Colchester Museum a large bronzed letter V is now preserved, which has been supposed to have once formed part of an inscription to the Emperor-God above the portal of that edifice. Later the Romans, who had become slothful and steeped in luxury, were overwhelmed at Camulodunum by the oppressed Britons, when town and temple were destroyed; the colony in fact, for a time, ceased to exist. But, unwilling to acknowledge defeat, and impatient to avenge themselves, the Romans came back, were victorious, and rebuilt the town. Then probably it was that the walls were erected, A.D. 65, in order to prevent, if possible, a repetition of the former disaster; but is also asserted by a high authority that they could not have been built until some twelve years later. At the present day careful examination seems to point to portions of the wall being of undoubted Roman origin, while many repairs have been executed with Roman materials; and it should be remembered that the conquerors taught the conquered to make both Roman brick and Roman tile. The myths of King Coel and his supposed daughter St. Helena yet linger about Colchester in the shape of certain

names, but of these personages, if they ever had any real existence, there is no authentic account. The legends are wild, and, upon the face of them, most improbable.

Upon the north side of Colchester the walls are first seen just beyond the present Cattle Market, where the road turns sharply to the right up an ascent known as Balkerne Hill, at the top of which hill once stood a fort called the Balkerne. Near the remains of the fort is a gabled house, built absolutely on the ancient wall. It is a great matter for regret that all the ancient gates of Colchester

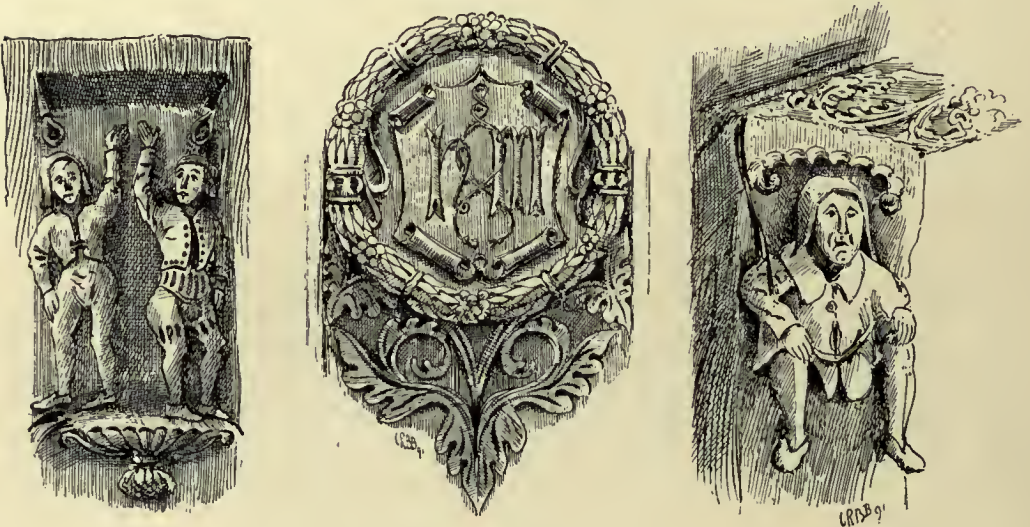


COLCHESTER.

have now disappeared. Possibly the convenience of passengers is much increased by their removal, but the loss to lovers of antiquity is immense. At intervals portions of the old walls peep out among the houses, and included, when perfect, an area which took the form of a parallelogram, whose longer sides measured about 1,000 yards each, and the shorter ones 500. The gates were four in number, and were known as Head-gate, North-gate, East-gate, and South or St. Botolph's-gate. There were also three posterns: Rye, or River-gate, sometimes called North, or King's Sherde; Schere-gate, or South-postern; and the West-postern, near St. Mary's.

Perhaps the most picturesque distant view of Colchester is one which can be obtained by turning down a side path to the left on the road to the town from the station. The massive block of the old Castle keep stands amid the trees, the backs and roofs of the houses in the High Street top the hill, and the fine modern spire of the church of St. Nicholas is seen at its best. The foreground, now chiefly occupied by cottages and factories, must, in the old days, have been the scene of many a fierce fight, and probably just beyond the river, down Dead Man Lane, the fugitive Danes hurried over their stockades to seek a safer refuge on board their galleys. On each side of the road, when once the river is reached, the houses show signs of antiquity; but as far as external decoration goes they are sadly lacking in interest. Halfway up the steep North Hill, however, is an old inn, bearing the sign of "The Marquis of Granby," and here, in a ground-floor room, now used partly as a passage and partly as a cellar, is a most remarkable carved beam—a beam which, all things considered, could not be easily matched. Of the carving here the sketches will give some little idea. The main beam has in its centre the initials H. M., and either a Merchant's Mark or a Knot Badge, surrounded by a wreath. The whole of the rest of the beam is occupied by a beautiful floral pattern which extends to the walls, where brackets or trusses carved with the grotesque figures sketched support its ends. These figures are specially valuable from the extreme care with which the details of the costume have been wrought. Another beam in a portion of the room now partitioned off is of good design, the foliated bands which bind its flutings being not a little

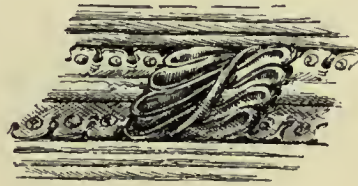
elegant. At the end of a passage which leads from the street to the innyard, in the right-hand corner of the archway, is to be found the quaint carved oak head illustrated. It is good of its kind, and of by no means a common type. The writer was gravely informed that "this was the house of Henry III.," on the authority of somebody who had thus read the initials carved in the centre of the beam—an instance of how myths



may arise. In the passage beneath the beam, it ought also to be mentioned, there are one or two panels of extremely interesting decorated linen pattern. A little higher up the hill, on the opposite side of the road, in the back garden of No. 47, are three carved grotesque window-brackets, dated 1655. A fourth one exists, but it is hidden by some recent additions to the house. At the top of the hill stands St. Peter's Church, with its red-brick tower. This has an interesting little crypt, and a few brasses

of sixteenth and seventeenth century date ; also a monument to the Colchester martyrs, who suffered during the Marian Persecution. Nearly opposite to St. Peter's is a comfortable double gable-ended old inn, known as "The Waggon and Horses"—a rambling old house, with huge cupboards in out-of-the-way corners.

The High Street of Colchester is a very fine one, wider by far than most main streets of provincial towns ; and from one point of view—that of the antiquary—it is much to be deplored that



MARQUIS OF GRANBY.

it has been so modernized. The quaint little church of St. Rumbald, which once blocked it, has been demolished ; the ancient and historic Moot Hall has shared the same fate, the alleged reason being "convenience ;" and, in fact, for a considerable distance down there is no building of venerable appearance externally, except the "Red Lion" Hotel. Here there is, however, some very decent carving ; but the original work and "restored" details are somewhat mixed. Upon these premises, years ago, a Roman tessellated pavement was discovered, and a fragment of it is

still preserved with proper care therein. At the end of the High Street, by a narrow lane to the left, the Castle is reached, the entrance to which has been selected for an etching. Here it should be remarked that the domed top of the tower is of comparatively modern date.

Colchester Castle was a Royal possession, and was erected at an early date after the Norman Conquest. It is neither a Saxon nor a Roman building, though, no doubt, it occupies the site of Roman buildings, in common with nearly every other house in the town, for it is hardly possible to excavate anywhere in Colchester without coming across fragments of Roman work. The Castle was in existence when, in 1091, it was granted to Eudo Dapifer by William Rufus. The area of its ground plan is considerably in excess of that of the White Tower of London, and, in common with the latter, Colchester possesses, at its south-east corner, a semi-circular projection, forming the apse of the crypt, falsely called the chapel. In the White Tower, as all know, the Chapel of St. John—that perfect specimen of early Norman work—has beneath it a crypt, beneath which again is a sub-crypt—the apartment leading out of the torture-chamber, *viâ* “Little Ease.” Now, in Colchester the crypt and sub-crypt are in existence, but the chapel has disappeared. The general plan of the internal arrangements of a Norman keep are well ascertained, and yet with this knowledge, and in defiance of all common sense, people have been eager to curtail Colchester Castle by at least one story, and to render it therefore a place which, if inhabited by the Castellan and his family, could not have accommodated a sufficient guard ; or, if the guard was quartered duly, the



Colechester Castle.

Castellan must have found other lodgings. As with the White Tower, so with Colchester, the stairway is situated at the south-west angle of the building, and a grand newel it is, fully sixteen feet in width—the widest newel in the kingdom, its central pillar measuring two feet in diameter.

The arched doorway by which the keep is entered claims some attention. It appears to have been cut through the wall after the keep itself was built, and must in that case have needed a flight of steps to lead up to it, as its level would certainly have been above that of the ground line. The mouldings of the arch are plain and bold. There are traces of the existence of two pairs of gates and the portcullis groove, all confined within the comparatively small space of twelve to thirteen feet, the thickness of the wall at this point. Relics of a warder's seat, in the shape of a niche, are yet to be seen, and hereabouts the wall bears a few mutilated carvings and an inscription. In one corner of the now open court—a court which was formerly the basement of the keep, and divided by a partition wall now destroyed—is the small arched door leading to the dungeon, from



THE DUNGEON DOOR, COLCHESTER CASTLE.

which Sir George Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas passed to be shot outside the outer northern wall of the keep. Of these loyal gentlemen further mention will be made hereafter.

But, it may be asked, how did Colchester Castle come to such a condition of ruin, seeing that it must when in its prime have been the mightiest Norman castle in the kingdom? It is sad to relate that a historic building, which had been taken and retaken in the time of King John, and which had been spared by the Roundhead cannon in the days of the memorable siege, was at length sold to a speculator, one Wheely, who endeavoured to make money out of the materials, demolishing all that he possibly could, cutting passages through the walls of the ancient pile, trafficking in the stones of the windows and Roman tile of the walls; but, eventually, thanks to the hardness of the Norman cement, losing money over his scandalous venture, and glad to sell the mutilated relics to one who knew how to preserve them reverently. Still, it must be remembered that Norman castles were built in an age which knew not gunpowder, and that as a defensive building Colchester Castle was useless, else it would have suffered, perhaps, worse treatment from the cannon of Fairfax than from the picks and crowbars of the mercenary Wheely. With the contents of the Museum, which now occupies the first crypt of the Castle Chapel, one has here nothing to do. To write on this subject would need a volume to itself. Suffice it to say that though there are many and most valuable Roman curios therein contained, yet these are but a tithe of the rich harvest furnished by the ground in Colchester. Some objects are unique, notably the "Colchester Sphinx" and the

huge "Colchester Urn;" but it is to be regretted that more of the local "finds" do not come into the possession of the Corporation and the Essex Archæological Society, whose joint property this most interesting Museum is.

When Eudo was gathered to his fathers he left an only daughter, Margaret, who was married to William de Magnaville, the Constable of the Tower of London. Now, it would have been bad policy upon the part of Henry I. to have committed the Castle of Colchester also into the keeping of this already powerful feudatory; and the wise king conferred the office upon Hamo de St. Clare—who continued to hold it during part of the reign of Stephen. The Empress endeavoured to bestow it upon Aubrey de Vere, but this gave one of the Magnavilles an opportunity. He was son-in-law of Vere and grandson of Eudo, and claimed the office of Constable as by right, in reality demanding it as the price of his allegiance. His intrigues with both sides are to be read in the pages of history. Subsequently the heritage of the St. Clares was divided, and the keepership of the Castle alone remained to them; passing afterwards to an only daughter and heiress, who had married William de Lanvalei, in which family it remained for three generations. During the reign of John, whilst the Constable was absent with the Barons, the King obtained possession of the castle, which he confided to a foreigner, one Stephen Harengoot, who prepared for a siege. John, however, was forced to give way to the popular party; Magna Charta was signed, and Harengoot was ordered to surrender the castle, and complied. Next, a French garrison is found within the walls, prepared

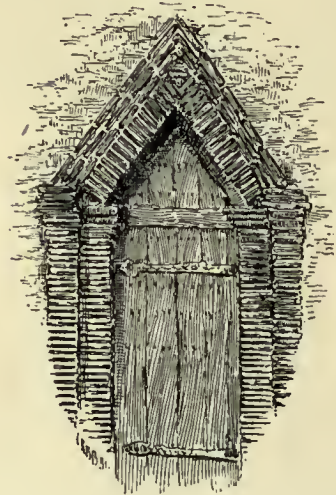
to hold the strong place against the royal party, who, having taken Rochester, were hastily marching to reduce Colchester. The army, under the command of Savaric de Mauleon, sat down before the place, and afterwards John in person arrived to expedite the siege. Colchester capitulated, owing to the treachery of the French knights, who literally sold their English comrades. To his delight Stephen de Harengoot was again placed in charge, the King departing to besiege and take Hedingham Castle. The condition of the town was then an unenviable one, as it was liable to oppression from the castle, and likewise open to be plundered by the popular party. In the year 1216 the castle was surrendered to the Dauphin Lewis, and was, in fact, the last stronghold which did surrender to him. In the following year, after the treaty of Lambeth, William, Bishop of London, was appointed Constable, and upon his translation to another See, his successor, Eustace, became likewise, for a short time, Constable of Colchester; to be followed by the great Hubert de Burgh. After de Burgh came Stephen de Segrave, and from that time the old castle seems to have lost its importance in a measure, being for the future a prison for felons, and under the control of the Sheriff of Essex. Its political status had departed, and it was only as a valuable property that its keepership was henceforward the object of intrigue. The list of the various holders of the office is too long here to enumerate. How its walls contained the wretched sufferers for conscience' sake in the days of Queen Mary, and how some of these even suffered in the Castle Bailey itself, may be read at length in the "Book of Martyrs." The cell where James Parnell, the Quaker, was con-

fined, and where he ultimately died starved and in misery, may yet be seen. His piteous story has been so often told that it would be superfluous here to repeat it ; it is but another page in the sad tale of fanaticism. But it is strange to note that, despite the fact that Protestant, Sectarian Colchester warmly espoused the cause of Queen Mary during the nine days' "reign" of Jane Dudley, and that, shortly after her accession, the Queen in triumph visited the town, yet no district suffered more in proportion from religious persecution than this loyal Essex. And without doubt to this maddening persecution, aided by the fanatic spiritual influence of the refugees in later times from Holland, is to be ascribed the fact that the royal cause in the times of the Great Rebellion was, as far as this county is concerned, a lost one from the very beginning of the struggle.

To this day the evidences of the siege are manifest in the town. They meet the eye on all sides ; some of the churches are even yet partially in ruins. The grand old priory Church of St. Botolph is a complete wreck, and of the mansion which was built out of the materials of St. John's Abbey not one trace is left. Here it may be well to make some allusion to the ecclesiastical antiquities in Colchester which are at the present time most noteworthy. Considering the number of the churches within the walls and immediately without them, the points particularly to be mentioned are not many. Of the churches that of the Holy Trinity is perhaps the most interesting, for the western door is certainly remarkable. It is built, as will be seen by the sketch, of Roman tile, and in lieu of a curved arch it has a triangular head. The general opinion

inclines to assign a Saxon date to this door, and it would appear to be a reasonable conclusion. The whole of the building is interesting, and to those who enjoy old ecclesiastical buildings, a careful study of the interior will be productive of not a little pleasure. Among the church furniture is an ancient mazer, to which the date

of Richard II. has been allotted, but it is not easy to see upon what grounds.



WEST DOOR OF HOLY TRINITY
CHURCH.

The other church is dedicated to St. Martin, and is still very interesting, despite the recent restoration, which has taken the form in part of mural painting. The energy displayed in stencilling terrible wall-paper patterns on the walls was undoubtedly well meant, but the results are something too painful to contemplate. Still the curious wooden arch within the chancel, which supports a "king-post," has not been removed, and the chancel ceiling, unless it has

within the last few months suffered at the hands of the "spoiler," is remarkably fine. The exterior also of this quaint little church may well be studied, and with care, and the ruined tower is even now as the siege left it. It may also be noted that the stone altar-slab has its crosses duly incised.

It is not easy to gaze upon the ruins of St. Botolph's Priory in Colchester without a mixed feeling of astonishment and sorrow—astonishment at the marvellous architectural effect produced by the

builder with only the roughest of materials, and sorrow that such a monument should so have suffered at the hands of man. Built entirely, or almost entirely, of Roman tile, the west front is grand, even in this its hour of dire decay, and the arcade of interlacing circular arches presents this peculiarity, viz., that at the intersections pointed arches are formed—a great rarity this in Norman work. The massive western doorway is yet in a tolerable state of preservation, and shows its bold zigzag mouldings of rubbed brick. It is deeply recessed, as may be seen from the sketch. Above the arcade is the fragment of what was no doubt once a fine rose-window. How is it that modern rose-windows are ever failures, while those of antiquity were ever things of beauty? Above this window, again, on the south side, is a small fragment of an arcade which shows that the decoration above and below was similar. Of the two towers which flanked the western gable no trace is now left. Passing into the space which once was the nave of this grand old church, the desolation of the spot becomes even more apparent; but its very desolation and sadness adds to the picturesqueness of the scene. Outside, one stands in a well-kept public garden. Inside, one finds a deserted and neglected graveyard. Amid the rows of massive tile and rubble columns stand comparatively modern tombs, some of which are in a condition which beggars description. It may be appropriate, but it is certainly hardly creditable. Now this is really an opportunity for the ever-ready hand of the restorer. Let him repair the grave-stones. Care has been taken to preserve as far as may be the columns and arches of both nave and aisles of the Priory Church. Perhaps the most

picturesque view of the interior is that which has been selected for one of the sketches, as it at any rate gives some notion of the best end of the ruin. But to see the place to perfection it is



ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY, WEST FRONT.

needful to stroll thither either at sunset or when the moon is at full height ; it is then a scene not easily to be forgotten.

The history of St. Botolph's is as follows :—In the year 1109 the monastery was founded under the Augustinian rule by a monk named Ernulph, who eventually became the first prior. It was

dedicated to St. Botolph and St. Julian, and appears to have been the first Augustinian priory founded in England, for which reason by Papal Bull it took precedence of all other houses of that rule. It was ever a poor foundation, for Ernulph had nothing



ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY.

with which to endow it, and donations do not appear to have come in generously, so that even at the Dissolution its revenues were comparatively small. They were granted by the King to Lord Chancellor Audley, and no doubt assisted to still further expand the pouch already well stuffed with Church plunder.

In the parish of St. Giles stands the fine gateway, the sole relic of the once noble Abbey of Colchester. This Abbey, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was founded by Eudo de Rie (Dapifer) upon the site of the small hermitage of Siric, where also stood a little church dedicated to the Baptist. The

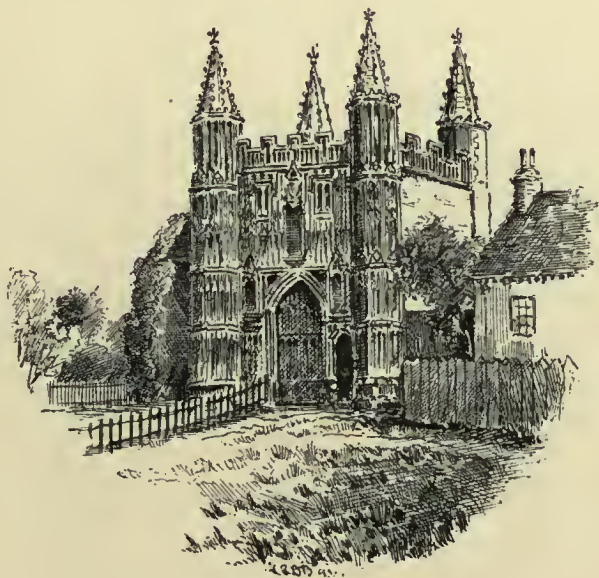


COLCHESTER ABBEY.

spot was a hallowed one, and wonders were frequently worked there—so tradition tells. St. John's Abbey was not, however, founded without considerable difficulty, as for a time Eudo lay under the cloud of Royal displeasure, and was unable to find funds for the endowment. Quarrels also occurred among the few monks from Rochester who were the first denizens of this new Benedictine House. The original monks, four in number, were sent back to Rochester and a new colony of thirteen were imported from York. The nephew of Eudo, one William, a priest, now entered into the scheme with considerable zeal, sparing neither time nor money, and the new Abbey then began to rise apace. It appears that at the date of the Consecration of the Abbey church the number of monks was twenty, and as far as can be ascertained this number was hardly ever increased.

The present gateway is of late date, and is built of stone and dressed flint; the panels and niches which ornament its front are very handsome. The groining of the gateway itself is fine, though it has been somewhat damaged—tradition states by a shell during the siege, but more probably by a round shot. Upon one side of the gate is a porter's lodge, and upon the other there appears to be a fireplace. (A similar example of a fireplace exists in

the gateway of the Clugniac Priory of Montacute, in Somersetshire.) St. John's Gateway belongs to the Government, and has been restored. According to old prints it would seem to have had a flat-hipped roof and to have lost its crenellations in the earlier years of the present century, but otherwise it does not appear to be much changed.



GATEWAY OF ST. JOHN'S ABBEY.

The Abbey, at the Dissolution, was granted by lease to Sir Thomas Darcy, and seems quickly to have gone to ruin. Purchased by one of the Lucas family, the stones were used to build a mansion—a mansion which was sacked, burned, and destroyed during the siege. An old print is extant which shows the south prospect of the Abbey church, and from which all that can probably ever be known of this fine old building must be derived.

To all appearance the church was cruciform, with narrow, low aisles. Its central tower was crenellated, and had four small circular corner turrets, besides a circular central one. All the turrets were surmounted by stumpy, extinguisher-shaped spires. At the west end, at the south corner, stood a circular flanking tower, and on the extremity of the western gable a small hexagonal bell turret appears. From the print the windows, which are small, seem to be chiefly lancets, and four of these are shown at the east end, above which, again, are two small ones, the point of the gable being occupied by a quatrefoil. The absolute site of the church is unknown now, but it is believed to have stood somewhat to the south-east of the gateway.

The last Abbot of Colchester was John Beche, and he was one of the three mitred Abbots who refused either to surrender the Abbey or to acknowledge the King's supremacy in matters spiritual. He was of course right from his point of view, but repaid the penalty for his daring with his life, being hanged for high treason at Colchester, in 1539, his fellow-mitred abbots, those of Reading and Glastonbury, sharing the same fate. An ordinary abbot was by no means an unimportant personage, but a mitred abbot was a very great man indeed: for of these there were but twenty-eight in the whole kingdom. The sad fate of the Abbots of Reading and Glastonbury was deplored in the localities over which they ruled, but with John Beche this does not seem to have been the case, as he appears to have been locally unpopular. But the underhand and cold-blooded way in which, according to tradition, he was seized and executed, does not, if correct, reflect credit

upon the honourable feelings of the townsfolk. To invite a great man, even if he is a religious foe, to a feast, and forthwith arrest and summarily hang him may show loyalty to a king's order, and possibly might be held excusable by some upon the score of Protestant zeal, but on grounds of common morality such an act must needs be for ever reprehended.

Near the Abbey-gate stands the small and tumbledown



LUCAS.



REBOW.



CORNER POST, ST. JOHN'S STREET.

church of St. Giles—memorable only as being the burial-place of the luckless, though gallant, knights Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle. They lie beneath a slab upon which is deeply graven the following inscription: "Under this marble ly the bodies of the two most valiant captains, S^r Charles Lucas and S^r George Lisle, Knights, who, for their eminent loyalty to their Soverain, were on the 28th day of Avgvst, 1648, by the

command of S^r Thomas Fairfax, then General of the Parliament army, in cold blood barbarovsly murdered."

Not far from St. Giles' Church, at the corner of Sheregate and St. John's Street, stand a group of old houses, one of which has a well-carved corner-post decorated with a floriated pattern far more elaborate than that upon the house in Saffron Walden. Hence a drawing of this post in detail is inserted. A few doors beyond is a finely-carved beam. Parallel to St. John's Street runs a short lane, now known as Sir Isaac Rebow's Walk, which leads into Eld Lane.

Sir Isaac Rebow, a Colchester worthy of past days, whose coat armour is here given, was the son of John Rebow, a refugee from the Netherlands who settled in Colchester and pursued the calling of a bay and say manufacturer, in which he prospered exceedingly. Isaac, the son, was the host of King William III., in both 1693 and 1700, and was knighted. He served as the borough Member during the greater part of two reigns, and in the first Parliament of George I., and was also the Recorder and High Steward. At this period the family house was in Head Street, which runs at right angles to Sir Isaac's Walk. It appears that the Knight went to the expense of having it "gravell'd and made handsome," at least so says Morant, and hence probably the name originated. A monument to John Rebow, the father, is in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, commonly called St. Mary's at the Wall; but it seems to have been erected some years after his death. Of this church only the lower part of the tower remains. The town wall stands but a few feet from the west end,

and when seen from the street beneath the building is decidedly picturesque, despite the modern brick top to the tower.

In so old a town as Colchester it is rather remarkable, when its size is considered, that picturesque old houses should be so comparatively scarce. Isolated specimens exist in plenty, but with the exception of the lower end of North Stockwell Street, there is hardly another place where the "old world" air predominates in the dwellings.



NORTH STOCKWELL STREET.

Of far greater antiquity in Colchester than the Rebow family was that of Jobson. As far back as the year 1462 a Thomas Jobson migrated to Essex from Heslington in Northumberland. He appears to have filled various municipal offices between the years 1476 and 1499. His son William was alderman and bailiff of the borough. Next came a Francis Jobson, who was knighted, and married Elizabeth Plantagenet, the third daughter and co-heir of Arthur Viscount Lisle. Now, Lord Lisle was the natural son of

Edward IV. by Jane Shore, and hence the Jobsons impaled her coat armour, as the drawing shows (p. 198). Sir Francis prospered greatly, and eventually became Lieutenant of the Tower, and a member of the Court of Augmentation at the suppression of the monasteries, from the spoils of which he waxed indeed wealthy. Sir Francis died at Monkwiķe, West Doniland, Essex, on June 11, 1573, and was buried in the church of St. Giles, Colchester.

Another Colchester, or rather Essex, man needs brief notice—viz., Sir Harbottle Grimston, Judge and Speaker of the House of Commons. His father, the first baronet, a Puritan gentleman of



GRIMSTON.

old family and moderate estate in Essex, was Member for that county in 1625-1627, and appears to have been imprisoned for refusing to contribute to a forced loan. Sir Harbottle was born in 1602, near Manningtree, and was educated at Emanuel College, Cambridge. In 1629, having married, and engaged himself in the

study of the law, he entered Parliament as M.P. for Harwich. Shortly afterwards he became Recorder of that town in succession to Coke. Next he was chosen Recorder of Colchester, and was its Member in the Parliament of 1640, and also in the Long Parliament. He was on the popular side in politics, and took a prominent part against Laud. He seems to have ever acted as an honest partisan in matters political during the stormy times of the Great Rebellion. After the abdication of Richard Cromwell the Protector, Grimston sat on the Committee for summoning a new Parliament, and was elected Speaker of the Conven-

tion Parliament. At the Restoration his speech of welcome to Charles was notorious for the fulsome servility of its sentiments. He sat on the Commission appointed to try the regicides, and was shortly after created Master of the Rolls, a post which, it is said, he obtained through bribery. He died in January 1684, and is believed to have been buried near St. Albans.

Lexden, the largest of the extra-mural parishes comprised within the borough of Colchester, is a most extremely pretty place, and is one which it may be hoped will long preserve its charming rural appearance. The church has unfortunately been entirely rebuilt during the present century, and the edifice now presents an appearance the reverse of architecturally beautiful. Within it there is a fine old brass alms-basin, almost exactly similar to the one in Wareham Church, Dorset. This dish is decorated in *repoussé* work, with the scriptural subject of the spies and the huge bunch of grapes. Higher up the hill the village street is very picturesque, the houses, all of different shapes and sizes, with their banked-up gardens and long flights of steps, are a pleasing contrast to the streets of the town. Formerly there were three celebrated crosses in Lexden: one stood at the cross roads, and was known as Lamb's Cross; a second, built of brick and stone, was erected on the top of Lexden Hill, while the third was on the fringe of Lexden Heath. But all three have now vanished, and it is by tradition alone that their sites are handed down.

Upon Lexden Heath are the relics of ancient entrenchments, now known as the "Ramparts." Here it was that Fairfax pitched his camp, at the time of the siege, and it is stated that his

residence was Lexden Lodge, quite a small farm now, but still surrounded by a perfect moat. On the road between Lexden and the ramparts are many pretty spots; trees and water abound, and the path winds down a hill till, at a turn, the farm, known



LEXDEN.

as Malting Farm, comes in view. Here there is a rather remarkable granary of a type now becoming exceedingly rare. The arrangement of sloping plaster between the short upright timbers, of the sides is specially to be noticed.

From Lexden it was that Fairfax issued his orders—orders

which knocked to pieces the fine old churches and houses of ancient Colchester. It is somewhat strange that this two months' siege should have taken place, as it were, by accident, for evidently the Royalist party, under Lucas and Lisle, had no intention of being shut up in the town. The rising of 1648, in the beginning, seems to have partaken more of the nature of a raid. Outmanœuvred and



MALTING FARM.

outgeneralled in every way, as they were, it seems simply marvellous that the ill-provided Royalists, in a hostile town, could have endured the prolonged siege so obstinately. If one wanders round Colchester with a fair map, a very clear idea may be obtained of the position of affairs and the chief points of attack. The story of the siege is a long one, too long to narrate here in detail, nor indeed would it be well to spoil by curtailment so fine a

narrative of loyalty and pluck. By means of a verbal quibble in the terms of the surrender, Fairfax selected three of his conquered foes and ordered their immediate execution. Private vengeance supplied a motive for the execution of one of them; no particular reason can be assigned for the death of the second; while the third, a foreigner, Sir Bernard Gascoigne, was reprieved for fear of the consequences likely to follow on his death. Hurriedly from the dungeon in the old castle keep the unfortunate gentlemen were marched out to be shot, and met their death, as might be expected, with fortitude. A few hours later, in an equally hasty manner, their bodies were buried in the Lucas vault within the church of St. Giles.

A few extracts from the State Papers which refer to Colchester will be here inserted to conclude the chapter. In 1591 many of the poor inhabitants of Colchester petition the Queen, complaining of the great numbers of Dutchmen and foreigners settled in the town during the last sixteen years (though previous petitions from the place had been strongly in favour of the Dutch Church there established), whereby they are deprived of sustenance for themselves, their wives and children, provisions being so dear. They also complain of the enclosure of common ground (800 acres) by the townsmen of Colchester. This is stated to have been done by the leave of Sir Thomas Heneage, but they assert that they do not think "good" Sir Thomas would give such leave. The petition concludes with a prayer, first for vengeance, and then for redress from the Queen as the mother of her subjects. On June 16, 1596, Sir Thomas Lucas writes to the Privy Council from his house, at

St. John's, Colchester, giving a lengthy account of an attempt to seduce the trained bands by seditious language, which was made by a certain Sir John Smythe. Sir John seems to have been very unskilled in seditious arts, for he committed the egregious folly of riding up to the pikemen and archers and pointblank proposing that they should desert. One only joined him, by name Mannock, a



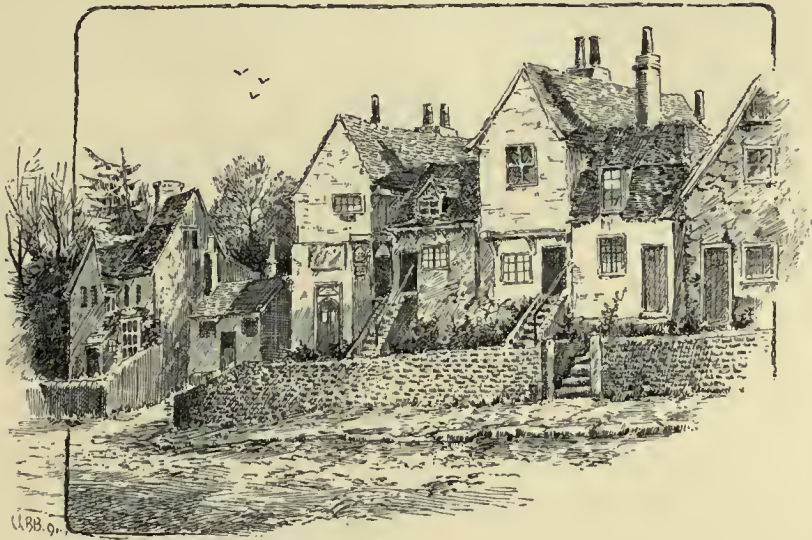
THE RAMPARTS.

recusant. The reports and depositions on this matter are very voluminous, but very interesting. Eventually Sir John Smythe was committed to the Tower, whence he despatched a most argumentative epistle to the Council, in which the right of monarchs to levy troops was strenuously denied. Later on it was discovered that Sir John had at his house at Coggeshall "divers things supposed to

be for war, locked up in chests and trunks of great weight." Great boxes of bullets, with "fine devices to charge a piece readily and surely," probably cartridges, for it is stated lower down that "not so few as 1,000 of them are in readiness." The boxes, it appears, contained bows and arrows sufficient to equip forty men. When under examination, Sir John professed to have taken too much red and white wine at dinner, but owned that he felt much aggrieved with "divers matters offered him by the Lord Treasurer," and that, being angry, he had spoken words he knew not what. Unfortunately, beyond the mention that Sir John had made a confession amounting to pleading guilty to treason, we cannot find how the matter ended.

On October 29, 1634, William Lynne writes from Little Horsley, near Colchester, to Archbishop Laud. This is a very curious letter, in which the writer expresses his sorrow at the backwardness of the neighbourhood in aiding to repair St. Paul's. A great parish near him, he says, lately gave sixpence, while some give nothing at all, and the best give "not so much as was spent in persuading them." The letter goes on to denounce one Thomas Cotton, of Bergholt, as a "great depraver of Government," in whose study would be found all the "discontented books and speeches invective against the Church and State." Mr. Cotton, it seems, maintained "some peevish intelligencer in London" to weekly send him news of the time, which news he used to read aloud in the market. Mr. Lynne proposes that Laud should "sting" Cotton! Mr. Cotton's study seems to have been searched, as, a few months later, a list of his books is given, though it is possible that they may

have been the property of a Puritanical friend of his, one Dr. Bastwick. In the January of the following year the informer Lynne writes to the Secretary Windebank in much perturbation of spirit. Mr. Cotton, it appears, has been set at liberty, and is vowing vengeance. Lynne fears that he will be assaulted by one John Barnish, a "professed ruffian, that keeps most at his house" (Cotton's), and carries a pocket pistol.



LEXDEN STREET.

In some notes by Nicholas, of business to be transacted by the Lords of the Admiralty, the following occurs under date January 13, 1634-5:—"The town of Colchester is now passing their Charter, by which they are to have concurrent jurisdiction with the Admiralty in Admiralty affairs, which is an ill precedent"; upon the margin of this is written, "Speak with the Lord Keeper to stay it

at the seal." Doubtless the good burgesses of Colchester wondered what the hitch was, or who was placing an impediment in the way. In 1636 (?) one Boroughs, of Colchester, is mentioned by Dr. Aylett, in notes for a letter to Laud. Boroughs is, it appears, in custody for disturbing three congregations at three several churches there one Sunday morning, and, moreover, for exhibiting a very scandalous libel against Church Governors and Church Government. On the 25th January, 1636-7, the Council sends down an order to the Mayor of Colchester bidding him to send to London in safe custody a man named Edward Bell, who, it appears, had forged the handwritings of Archbishop Laud and of the Lord Privy Seal and the Earl of Holland, on a paper which he used to "colour his villany in abusing the country" by begging. In April, 1637, a curious case occurs. It appears that a certain baymaker of Colchester, by name Thomas Reignolds, was accused of having paid some of his *employés* in "dead commodities" instead of in money. The workmen appealed to the magistrates, who decided that Reignolds should pay the complainants a certain sum of money and give further satisfaction; but he refused to obey the order, boasting that he would spend £100 before he would pay them a penny. In a petition to the Council Reignolds denies the charge, going into a lengthy and detailed account of his transactions, and encloses six affidavits of various weavers in support of his case. A certificate was also forwarded about the same time signed by Thomas Browne and ninety-five other persons, to the effect that the statements of the workmen of Reignolds were malicious

calumnies, and that during the time of his trading in the town he had "justly behaved himself in his trade, and done much good in setting many poor on work, and has ever dealt honestly in paying them for their labour." The Council, however, committed Reignolds to the Fleet until he should pay to the petitioners double as much wages as he has defrauded them of. Reignolds was kept in confinement for a week, during which time his works were burnt down, and he suffered heavy loss. He appears to have employed five hundred hands, and on petition was released, May 17, 1637.

On June 21, 1637, a singular document was sent to Sir Nathaniel Brent by Jonas Proast and Thomas Colt, ministers of the Dutch congregation, and others, in which they humbly recognize the archbishop's authority and thank him for his indulgence unto "our aliens and natives of the first descent, for enjoying their freedom in the use of their former rights of divine service and discipline." They acknowledge the receipt of an intimation from Brent and Aylett, "our worthy commissary," of his Grace's pleasure about our natives of the second descent, who are henceforth to receive the Holy Eucharist, to baptize, to marry, to bury, &c., in their parish churches. The paper concludes with the remark that "having maturely deliberated," they find nothing to except against his Grace's pleasure.

In March, 1640, comes a remonstrance from Sir John Lucas, complaining of the improper conduct of the saltpetremen in the house of Mrs. Lucas, called St. John's. Mrs. Lucas was in London, and during her absence the saltpetremen broke open the doors,

insulted her servants, and by force entered and dug in rooms both unfit and unlawful for them to dig in. He goes on to say that it is neither fair nor equal dealing for these saltpetremen to trouble the house of a person of Mrs. Lucas' quality, while there were many inns and other houses in Colchester fit for their purpose, and where they had not been at all. The saltpetremen, on being called to account, defended themselves in a long paper of answers, but the prevarications therein were so manifest that prosecution was threatened.

On Whit Monday morning, 1640, there was a kind of riot in Colchester, produced by the accidental discharge of a musket by a soldier, and something similar occurred on the following day. But the town was at that period in a very disturbed state, and there were rumours abroad that certain Irishmen had formed a design to fire the town. The trained bands were called out, and the place put into some condition of preparation against all emergencies. Four companies of soldiers were billeted upon the inhabitants, and this impost formed the subject of a petition from the bailiffs and commonalty praying its discontinuance, as the last sickness and the decay of trade had so impoverished the place that, though the rates were trebled, they were insufficient to keep the poor. They likewise accused the soldiers of committing "incredible villanies!"

Mention has previously been made of Dr. Bastwick. In December, 1640, a petition comes from him to the Commons. He was a doctor of physic, who wrote a Latin book called "*Elenchus Religionis Papisticae*," with an addition called "*Flagellum Ponti-*

ficis et Episcoporum Latialium," being "provoked to it," as he avers, by one Richard Short, a Papist. In the preface he declared that therein he meant nothing against such bishops as acknowledged their authority from kings, &c. But he had fallen into the clutches of the Court of High Commission on account of this work six years before. He was ruined, excommunicated, and had been ever since a close prisoner in the island of Scilly. He prays for release, a prayer which is referred by the House to a Select Committee. The poor man had also been pilloried and had his ears cropped. The case seems to have excited a great deal of feeling at the time, and in another paper there is a reference to the "ushering into London" of the unfortunate doctor towards the end of the year. He was probably then released, but two years later, on June 27, 1642, while in company with the son of Sir Henry Ludlow and "two other famous firebrands of this Statē," Bastwick was caught stealing secretly away from attending a Parliamentary Committee at Beverley. All were armed with "long pistols," and wore buff coats. In the letter narrating this fact Nicholas, the secretary, announces that they were "laid fast, and ordered to be brought safe to York Castle."

One other extract in conclusion :—

Early in the year 1662 Mary Lisle petitioned the king for payment from the Excise of £2,000. One of her brothers, Francis Lisle, was slain at Marston Moor; the other, Sir George, was barbarously murdered at Colchester. Her father had lost £20,000 by the prevention of an importation of tobacco and pipes

into Ireland, and though he received an order for its payment, the Lords Justices say that they cannot charge the revenue with such a sum. She states that she is the only survivor of her family, and "in her is nothing but their miseries." One is pleased to read that within a few days the petition was granted and the money paid.



JOBSON.



THE Trade Mark or Trade Label here illustrated came under the notice of the writer by chance. It was obtained from a volume of woodcuts in the Print Room of the British Museum. The label is the work of Dirk de Bray, who was the son of the artist Salomon de Bray, and was born at Haarlem about the year 1640. Dirk de Bray furnished trade marks and labels for half Europe, and there are several hundred examples still in existence. The writer has upwards of seven hundred.

This label has the arms of Colchester wrongly drawn as usual. The view of the Castle is evidently imaginary, but one is inclined to speculate upon the identity of the small building upon the left-hand side.

Another trade label of **J. B & C** is also in existence. The device is "the three cornflowers." A somewhat similar grotesque head appears beneath it, but it is surmounted by the arms of Haarlem, a usual feature in all the labels of Dirk de Bray.

ESSEX COINAGE.

BY

L. A. LAWRENCE, F.R.C.S.,

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY.

ESSEX COINAGE.

In the earliest times the coinage of England was carried on by different tribes.

Dr. Evans, in his "History of the Ancient British Coinage," places modern Essex in the central district—that inhabited by the powerful Trinobantes, and other tribes. The earliest British coins were rude imitations of classical models, and the designs alone were copied, as the inscriptions were probably unintelligible to the British coiner. A little later, coins bearing much the same style of design, but inscribed, were struck, and it is to these early inscribed British pieces that the first reference is to be made in describing the coinage of Essex. There are rare coins struck in gold, silver, and copper, bearing on one side the letters TASC, or Tasciovan, and these are referred to a powerful King of the Segontiaci, named Tasciovanus. On some of these coins are the letters Ver, for Verulamium (St. Albans), and some bear the words RICONI and SEGO, also, perhaps, the ancient names of some towns. This king's coins are interesting, as, in all probability, many of them were struck in Essex, and the king himself was the

father of Cunobelin, who was an Essex man and undoubtedly struck coins in Essex. Cunobelin, who reigned from A.D. 3 to A.D. 41, was the ruler of the Trinobantes, and a most powerful chieftain. He struck coins in gold, silver, and copper; many of them present the letters CVNO, and one, in addition, the legend Tasciovani F. (for filius). Some of these coins of Cunobelin give us the first example of an Essex town, as CAMV can mean nothing else than Colchester, anciently called CAMVLODVNVM.

With these early British coins native art gives way to the civilization of Rome, and during the remainder of the Roman occupation the coins used were Roman, although many of them bear evidence of having been struck in Britain, and some—those of Carausius and Allectus—by Emperors really of Britain, though assuming the Roman title.

Following these Roman times comes the period of the second invasion of Britain by the Saxons and Angles, and, as one might expect, more or less of a change in the style of coinage. Little pieces of silver, and, in the north, of copper, now formed the mode of exchange, the former called sceattæ, the latter styçæ; but of these, and indeed of the heptarchic coins in general, none can be referred to Essex, as they do not bear the names of the places of mintage. It is not till the time of Eadgar, 959 to 975, that a piece bearing one of the county names is known. This coin, in the Royal Swedish Cabinet, has on the obverse the king's profile to the left, surrounded by his name and title. On the reverse, BVRHTE. RÐ M-O MAEL surrounds a small cross. This means that a moneyer of the name of Burhterth struck the coin in Maldon. Of Eadgar's imme-

diate successor no Essex piece is known, but in Aethelred II.'s time, 978 to 1016, coins occur bearing on the reverse COLE and other abbreviations of the name of COLECEASTER, Colchester. These pieces all have the king's head, name, and titles on the obverse, and on the reverse the names of the moneyer and mint. The reverse types for Colchester consist of, first, a small cross; second, a short double cross, with the letters CRUX in the angles; third, a long double cross dividing the coin into quarters.

The moneyers who struck at Colchester were Aelfwine, Eadmund, Edwine, Elewine, Godric, Godwine, Leofred, Leofstan, Leofwold, Manwine, Sedwine, Swetine, Toca, Wulfnoth, Wulfric, Wulfwine, Wulstan. The Maldon types of reverse, in addition, present a hand between $\bar{\Lambda}$ and $\bar{\omega}$, and a long double cross, over which is a square, with three pellets at each corner.

The Maldon moneyers were Aelfwine, Aethelwine, Eadwald, Leofwine, and Toca. The name of the town is given as some abbreviation of Maeldun, the whole name, however, appearing on some of the coins. Harwich is also one of the mint towns in this reign, and the name only occurs on coins of Aethelred. The moneyers were Aethelman, Aethelweard, Godman, and Isegel, and they coined in the hand and crux types only.

Canute the Great continued the mints both of Colchester and Maldon, but there seem to have been fewer coins struck at both these mints under Canute and his successors than under Aethelred. Canute's obverse types present the king, his head enclosed in a circle or a quatrefoil, and his name CNVT and titles as a legend surrounding. The reverses also vary: a cross in each case,

generally double, and usually enclosed in an inner circle, though this gives place to a quatrefoil where this latter ornament is present on the obverse. A little circle is in each angle of the cross on one type, and a square with one pellet in each corner is over the cross on another. These are all the known Colchester types under Canute, and the moneyers responsible for them are Aelfwine, Brunman, Edwine, Godric, Leofwine, and Wulfwine.

Maldon also presents the first three types, and the moneyers' names are Aelfwine, Aethelwine, Ceolnoth, Ciolnoth, Godere, and Leofwine.

Harold I., the son of Canute, reigned but a short time, from 1035 to 1040. His coins are few, but among them appear pieces of both Colchester and Maldon. The Colchester types present the profile bust, and usual legend on the obverse, and a cross composed of four ovals in one case; and in the other a double cross, with a floret in each angle, forms the reverse of the two known types. The Colchester moneyers' names are Aelfere, Godric, and Wulfwine.

Under Harold I. Maldon can only boast of one type—that composed of four ovals; and one moneyer, Wulfwine.

Hardicanute, Harold's brother, was elected king on his brother's death in 1040; he reigned only two years. His coins are extremely rare, and although there are none now known either of Colchester or Maldon, there is one coin representing Essex, having been struck at Witham. This is the only known coin from this mint. The obverse has the king's profile to the right, his name and title, HARÐACNVT REX, as legend. The reverse presents the same

cross, composed of four ovals, as Harold's, and the inscription AEGELPINE ON PIDA. This unique piece is in the Royal Swedish Cabinet at Stockholm.

On Hardicanute's death the succession devolved on Edward the Confessor, the son of Aethelred. His coins are numerous, and the types vary considerably. On some the king is represented full-face, on others in profile; while one type presents the king on his throne, and is known as the sovereign type.

Colchester is well represented by the following varieties:—

1. Obv. : Side-face to left. Rev. : Small cross.
2. " " " " " Long double cross; coins of this type are very small.
3. " " " " " Long double cross, PACX in the angles.
4. " " " right. " Short double cross within inner circle, pyramid surmounted by pellet, pointing inwards from inner circle, in each angle.
5. " " " left. " Short double cross within inner circle, over which is a square voided, with three pellets at each angle outwards.
6. " " " right. " Long double cross surmounted at each end by a segment of a circle curving inwards, the ends finished with pellets.
7. " " " " " Short double cross within an inner circle, each limb ending in a semicircle, and each end of this in another, all curving outwards.
8. " King on throne to right. " Short double cross, a martlet in each angle.

The moneyers' names are Brihtric, Brunnhyse, Goldman, Leofwerd, Wulfwine, Elfwine, Deormon.

Maldon coins are known of types 2, 7, and 8; and the moneyers' names are Dæinint, Ealdwig, Godric, Godwine, Swetric.

Harold II., on the death of Edward, mounted the throne, from which he was driven shortly afterwards by William of Normandy. His coins, not numerous of any sort, include Colchester, and, according to Ruding, Maldon (Mali). They are practically all of one type, the obverse presenting the king's bust to the left, crowned, and usually with a sceptre. The legend is Harold Rex Anglorum, or some abbreviation of the last word. For reverse, PAX, between two lines, divides the field within an inner circle. The moneyer coining at Colchester in Harold II.'s time was Wulfwi, an abbreviation of Wulfwine.

These last complete the series of Saxon coins struck in Essex.

The coins of William I. and II. now demand some attention. So far numismatists have been undecided as to where to draw the line in distinguishing the coins of the first William from those of his son and successor of the same name. Some types there are which so closely resemble Harold II.'s coins, both in style and workmanship, that there can be no doubt that they were struck under the auspices of the Conqueror. In the same way, there are certain pieces equally definitely to be assigned to William II., on account of their great resemblance to his brother Henry I.'s coins. But between these two ends of the series there are a considerable number of coins where equally good reasons can be found for assigning them to either king. I have dwelt on this point as several of the

Essex types fall under the class doubtful as regards their attribution.

The coins of undoubted attribution to William I., and struck in Essex, belong to type 1, as published in Hawkins' "Silver Coins of England." The obverse presents the king's profile to the left, and the treatment and general style of the head leaves no doubt that it is not only William I.'s, but that it is his earliest type, as it bears the strongest resemblance to Harold II.'s bust. The name *PILLEMVS*, followed by the title *REX*, forms the legend round the head. The reverse of the type exhibits a floriated cross within an inner circle, and, as on the Saxon pieces, the moneyer's name and that of the mint form the reverse inscription round the coin. Of this type there are coins of Colchester: moneyer, Goldstan.

The next type, also a Colchester one, is numbered as 6 in Hawkins' book. The king's full-faced bust, within an inner circle, is on the obverse; and there are two stars, one above each shoulder. The legend *PILLEM REX AN*, or some other abbreviation of *Anglorum*, completes this face. The reverse presents a square voided, a pellet at each angle, over which is a cross voided, each limb ending in three pellets, the whole within an inner circle. The usual legend is outside this circle. This is one of the type before referred to as of doubtful attribution. The moneyer accountable for it is Dirman.

Types 9 and 10 of Hawkins, the commonest of all the coins bearing the name of William, are those next concerned as inscribed with names of Essex mints. They differ from each other only

very slightly, and that on the obverse—a full-faced bust, the lower part reaching through the inner circle to the edge of the coin. The king is crowned, and holds in his right hand a sceptre. On the right shoulder, in type 9, are three pellets, and in type 10 an annulet or ring. Except for this and some slight difference in the shape of the crowns, these two types are the same. The legend is PILLELM REX. The reverse type consists of a cross patee—*i.e.*, a cross with flattened-out ends; in the angles are the letters PAXS, each enclosed within a little circle, the whole within the usual inner circle, without which is the inscription. Till the discovery of a great hoard of these coins at Beaworth, in 1833, this was a very rare type; but as some 12,000 of them were then unearthed they are now the most easily procurable William pennies. Colchester and Maldon both occur as mint towns on these two types. To which William they are to be assigned is still a question. The moneyers for Colchester are Ielfsi, Dirman, Wulfric, and Wulfwine; and for Maldon, Ielford, Ielfwine, and Livesun. Another type—a very rare one indeed—type 8 of Hawkins, differs from the preceding only in having the king's profile to the right instead of full-faced. This is probably a mule—*i.e.*, the obverse of one coin joined to the reverse of another. It occurs of Maldon, and the type is greatly sought after by collectors. The coin presenting the same obverse—*i.e.*, type 7—does not appear to have been struck in Essex at all.

Colchester, curiously enough, has also a mule coin assigned to it. The obverse is something like that on type 9, and shows the

full faced bust cutting the inner circle below. A sword in the king's right hand reaches over his right shoulder. PILLELM REX is the legend. This is the obverse of type 11. The reverse is of type 12 (a side-face type). It consists of a cross patee over a cross fleury, all within the inner circle. Both classes and likewise this mule are so far unassigned; the moneyer's name is Siword. Maldon is represented in type 12. Obverse: the side-face to the right, and the reverse as just described; moneyer's name, Levesun. This seems to be the last coin from the Maldon mint. Two more types of William coins occur bearing the name of Colchester, and these are both to be considered William II.'s, as they resemble in workmanship the coarse coins of the early years of Henry I.

Type 16 presents the full-face bust, with a sceptre over the king's right shoulder on the obverse, and the usual name surrounding it. The reverse a cross fleury over a cross formed of four narrow ovals, each surmounted by a pellet outwards. The inner circle and legend, so general on these coins, completes the piece; the moneyer's name is Siwioe. Type 18 shows the same general style of bust, but is even more coarse. The sceptre is omitted, and there are stars on each side of the head. The reverse crosses are a cross voided, with flattened ornamental ends, over a cross surmounted by a pellet, and above this an annulet. There is also an annulet in the centre of the ornamental reverse where the two crosses join; the moneyer's name is Swinen.

Henry I. continued using mints in different parts of the country, and though these mints for several reigns had been

decreasing in number, still, in Henry's time, the old method of giving each important town a mint prevailed.

Colchester is the only Essex town of which Henry's coins are known, and they are of two types, according to Hawkins' handbook.

An early one—type 3—a coin of small module, is of great rarity. Obverse: A large full-faced bust, crowned with an annulet on the right and a trefoil on the left shoulder: no inner circle. The name and title, and perhaps a letter or so of Anglorum round the head. The reverse has an inner circle, outside which are the moneyer's and mint names, and inside the word PAX placed across the coin. Above and below the word are two lines, and in the space enclosed between the outer lines and inner circle are placed two annulets. The moneyer's name was certainly a curious one—Sangwen.

Type 18, placed as a late one in Henry's reign, furnishes the other example of Colchester. On this piece the king is presented as a crowned profile to the left, holding a sceptre. The reverse a four-sided tressure, fleury at the angles outwards. Enclosed in the tressure is a star, and opposite each side three annulets united into a kind of trefoil. This design is limited by an inner circle. Coins of this type are rare, as, with few exceptions, are all Henry I.'s pieces, but this type is not nearly so uncommon as Type 3. Elsie was the name of the moneyer.

Stephen's reign furnishes evidence of the existence of the Colchester mint, as the town coined in the commonest type of this monarch. A profile to the right, with a sceptre, represents the

king on the obverse, with his name STIEFN and RE or REX following it. The reverse is a cross moline, commonly pierced at the ends. The terminations meet and form a four-sided tressure, which is fleured internally with trefoils pointing inwards. The inner circle is present. Edi . . . are the only letters remaining of the moneyer's name.

The last coin to be mentioned is one of Henry II., also struck at Colchester. It presents a rude three-quarter-face of the king, with a sceptre. The reverse a cross potent, with a small cross in each angle. This piece was coined before 1180, as in about that year the king ordered a quite new style of coin. Alwin is accountable for this coin, and two others in the British Museum have parts of names only decipherable. One NIL, the other RICA

All the coins heretofore described, except the ancient British, are of silver of good quality, and weigh from about eighteen to twenty-five grains. They are known as pennies, and were the only coins which circulated in the country. Though in British and Roman times gold, silver, and copper were used, there is no evidence of a currency other than silver from the time of Offa (excepting the copper stycæ of early Northumbria), when the penny was introduced till late in the reign of Henry III., who struck a few gold pennies, now of the greatest rarity. The two or three known gold Anglo-Saxon coins cannot be looked upon as more than patterns. Each mint throughout the country struck for its own neighbourhood. Of course the preceding list must not be taken as containing all the coins ever issued in Essex, as every day

the plough and spade are turning up fresh examples from all mints. Colchester, however, presents a wonderfully long array in comparison with most towns, and the mint there must have been in working constantly for a couple of centuries. The coinage, therefore, bears out the documentary and historical evidence of the early and continued importance of the town, and indeed goes back before history and points to its importance as a centre in Cunobelin's time. Before leaving these coins a word or so may be said with reference to the legends and the meaning, if any, of some of the reverses. The moneyer's name seems constantly connected with that of the mint by the little word ON. This is considered to mean by some OF: thus, Leofwine of Colchester; by others the word is interpreted IN. Whichever of these meanings attach to the word, it is curious to note the extreme regularity of its occurrence. A Saxon, or indeed any penny up to Edward I.'s time, without this word is looked upon as a great rarity. In earlier times the moneyers inscribed their names, followed by the word MONETA, leaving out the mint town. Gradually, however, the name of the mint was introduced, and then the title of the monetarius or moneyer was shown by the letter M before ON. Thus Aethelred's coins constantly read TOCA M-ON MAEL. Another point of constant occurrence on these pieces is a small cross separating the beginning from the end of the legend, both obverse and reverse. This cross is used on very early pennies, indeed coins of Cuthred of Kent (in the eighth century) bear it. It was continued, practically without interruption, till mintmarks took its place in the time of Henry III. Its use, besides being a form of stop, was as a repre-

sensation of the Christian symbol. The same idea one sees carried out on a large number of the reverses of these coins. A cross appears on the reverse of one of Cuthred's coins, and scarcely a king can be found subsequent to his time who has not adopted the symbol on one coin or another. Aethelred used the hand of providence, and on some rare pieces we find the lamb, evidently a religious symbol, as is the word *CRVX*. From Aethelred's time, with the exception of those rare coins reading *PAX* across the field, every coin down to Charles I.'s time, omitting the testoons of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. and Philip and Mary, bore a cross. The cross was also revived and used in the form of crossed shields from Charles II. to George III., and has been again revived on our florins. Besides being a Christian symbol, this reverse cross had another use in the times now being noticed. It acted as a guide for breaking or cutting the pennies into half-pence and farthings, and this was the ordinary way of obtaining small change; for until John's time no coins other than pence were struck (with the exception of some rare half-pence of early kings). The cutting was frequently done at the mint, as these halves and quarters of pence are constantly found associated with the whole coins, all in such fine preservation as precludes any idea of circulation.

Some reference must now be made to some curious coins or siege pieces which are said to have been struck at Colchester in the reign of Charles I., 1648. Pieces of the weight of two shillings and shillings occur on round, octagonal and oblong pieces of silver. One side only bears a design, that of a castle and the legend round it is "*Carolj fortuna resurgam*" in written

letters. These pieces are very rare, and have always been ascribed to Colchester, though it is not known on what authority. That they were "pieces of necessity" struck on old pieces of silver plate is pretty well certain; also that they were struck in Charles I.'s time, but the remainder rests on tradition. One more coin, an unusually interesting one, of this period deserves attention, a gold ten-shilling piece is preserved in the British Museum. It is fairly round, and has a castle figured on it. The King's initials, "C. R.," occur one on each side of the castle. Under the castle OBS. COL., and below this the date, 16 X 48, separated by X, for ten shillings. The reverse is incuse the same, owing to the use of a thin piece of metal. There is no doubt that this was struck at Colchester, and that it was a siege piece of Charles I.'s time. It is of the extremest rarity, as are all English gold siege pieces.

Heretofore all the coins which have been referred to have been those struck by some constituted authority, and from the days of Henry III. till Charles II.'s time the country seems to have got along fairly well with the regal coinage that was provided. In the reign, however, of the latter monarch, whether from exhaustion due to the many years of civil war or from other causes, small change was found to be *very* scarce, and the people themselves took the case into their own hands and issued small copper pieces known as tokens. This proceeding was clearly illegal, but it seems to have been more or less winked at, as immense quantities of these small coins have come down to our own times.

These tokens are very interesting as throwing a certain amount of light on the times during which they were issued.

Men's names, their occupations and abodes, are mentioned on many of them. They were issued chiefly by tradesmen, and were redeemable at their shops for the values placed on them.

In Essex there were some 359 different tokens issued. I do not propose to describe all these in detail, but shall merely give a list of the Essex towns where they were struck, with a few notes on the more curious ones.

Seventeenth-century tokens consist of half-pence and farthings. These latter, however, were issued in far larger numbers than the half-pence. Both are usually round, but half-pence are found heart-shaped, square, and octagonal. On one side is generally inscribed the name of the issuer, and on the other the place of the issue, as legends. In the field there is usually some design referring to the issuer's trade on one side, and the initials of the tradesman and his wife generally occupy the field of the other side. Very often, however, the denomination of the token is added in the field. These general remarks refer to all tokens, including those issued in Essex.

In the latest edition of Boyne's "Seventeenth-Century Tokens," Essex has 359 varieties attributed to it, and these coins were issued in eighty-five different places. Nearly three-quarters of them are farthings. The following list shows the places where these coins were issued, and the number struck in each place :—

Aveley	...	...	1	Black Notley	...	1	Chelmsford	...	...	23
Bardfield	...	...	3	Bocking	...	8	Chipping Ongar	...	...	1
Barking	...	...	11	Braintree	...	13	Clavering	...	...	1
Billericay	...	...	5	Brentwood	...	5	Coggeshall	...	...	13
Blackmore	...	...	1	Brooke Street	...	1	Colchester	...	...	74

Dedham 3	Manewden 1	Steeple Bumpstead ... 1
Dunmow 2	Manningtree 3	Stisted 3
Epping 9	Moulsham 3	Stock 3
Felsted 2	Muchbaddow 1	Stratford 4
Finchingfield ... 3	Muchclafton 2	Takeley 1
Foxearth 1	Newport Pond 5	Terling 1
Good Easter 1	Pebmarsh 1	Thaxted 9
Great Chesterford ... 3	Pentlow 1	Thorpe 2
Great Easton 1	Plaistow 4	Tollesbury 1
Great Sampford 1	Pleshey 1	Tolleshunt Darcy ... 1
Halstead 7	Purfleet 1	Toppesfield 1
Harlow 1	Quendon 2	Waltham 1
Harwich 7	Rayleigh 1	Waltham Abbey 8
Hatfield Broadoak ... 2	Ridgwell 1	Waltham (Great) ... 1
Hedingham (Castle) 5	Rochford 2	„ (Little) 1
„ Sible 3	Romford 10	West Ham 6
Henham 1	Saffron Walden ... 13	Wethersfield 1
Hornchurch 2	St. Osyth 3	Wickham 1
Ilford 2	South Benfleet 1	Witham 8
Ingatestone 4	South Minster 3	Wivenhoe 1
Kelvedon 2	Springfield 1	Woodham Mortimer 1
Leigh 4	Stebbing 4	Writtle 1
Leytonstone 2	Stansted Mountfitchet 3	Yeldham 1
Maldon 4		

The name of Essex occurs on most of these pieces, and commonly as Essex, or Essex; but John Allen, of Braintree, spells the name Esaxes, and Nathaniell Backler, of Dedham, Exssex. Essx seems to have taken the fancy of Nathan Heckford, of Halstead; while a grocer of Tolleshunt Darcy, named George Nicholson, has left us the abbreviation of Sx.

On these tokens all sorts of trades are represented, chiefly by the arms of the guild; thus, the Skinners put the Skinners' Arms on

their pieces : a shield, on the upper part of which are three coronets, and below eighteen ermine spots. Many tradesmen, however, chose to have ornamental devices rather than trade arms. The king's head frequently appears, a rabbit, fleur-de-lys, an angel, etc.

Tokens of peculiar shapes were issued at—

Chelmsford, by Henry Cordall, heart-shaped.

Epping, by George Dey, also heart-shaped.

Leytonstone, by John Unwin, octagonal.

Romford, by Francis Dilke, square.

Waltham Abbey, by Thomas Tylar, heart-shaped.

West Ham, by Gabriel Brewer, octagonal.

Some of the issuers of these pieces were well known in history ; others were of local celebrity.

Thomas Bugler, of Colchester, a Quaker, was imprisoned more than once for refusing to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy on the accession of Charles II. He issued a farthing.

Andrew Formantel and Nathaniel Lawrence were mayors of Colchester, as was William Moore.

Samuel Leader, of Saffron Walden, was treasurer twice ; and, again, Thomas Mahan, of the same place, was treasurer and chamberlain.

These are the principal Essex celebrities who issued the seventeenth-century tokens. If the towns are arranged in the order of numbers issued, we may, perhaps, get some idea of their relative importance.

Colchester heads the list with 74 ; then Chelmsford with 23 ;

Braintree, Coggeshall, and Saffron Walden follow, each with 13; Barking, with 11, is followed by Romford with 10.

These tokens form the last series which will be considered here. Those issued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are of quite different form, and served other ends.





1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



20



19



On the accompanying Plate are some Illustrations of the Coins and Tokens previously discussed. These pieces are all in the British Museum, and it is due to the courtesy of the custodians that so many examples of local mints have been brought together on this plate. The last piece has never been figured before.

Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are coins of Cunobeline ; the first in gold, the second in silver, and the third in brass. This last bears the whole name CAMVLODVNO.

- 4. A coin of Ethelred II., crux type, struck at Colchester.*
- 5. Canute the Great, of the Maldon mint.*
- 6. Harold I., Colchester.*
- 7. Edward the Confessor, Maldon. Type 7.*
- 8. Harold II., Colchester*
- 9. William I. or II., of Maldon. This is a coin of type 12.*
- 10. Henry I. Type 18 of Colchester.*
- 11. Stephen, of Colchester.*
- 12. Henry II. (his first coinage), of Colchester.*
- 13, 14, 15, 18 and 19 are examples of Essex seventeenth-century halfpenny tokens.*
- 16 and 17. Farthings.*
- 20. The rare Colchester gold siege piece.*

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